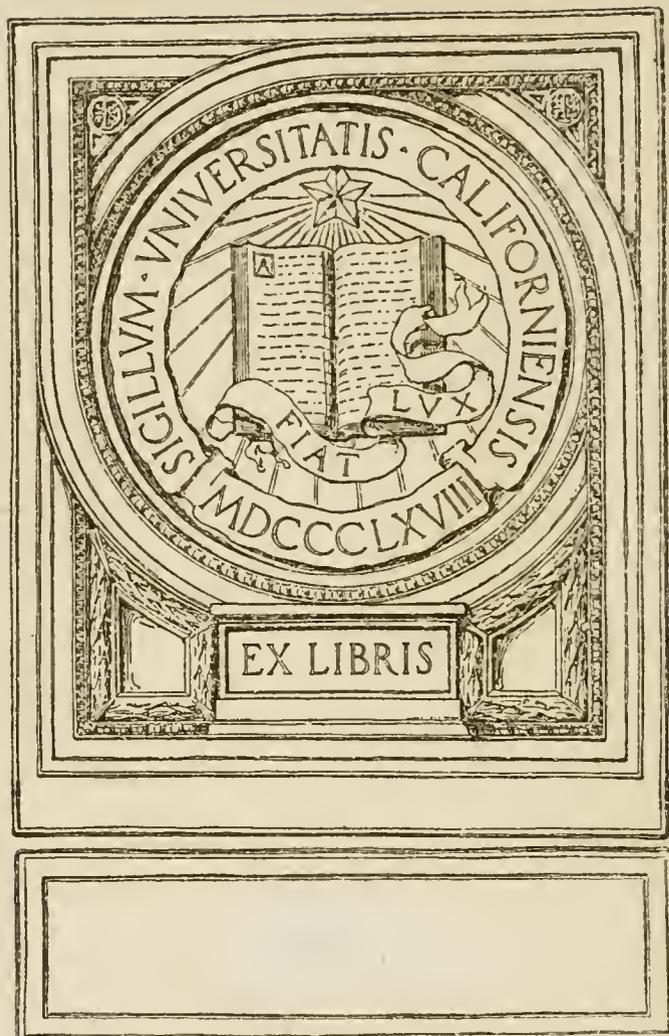
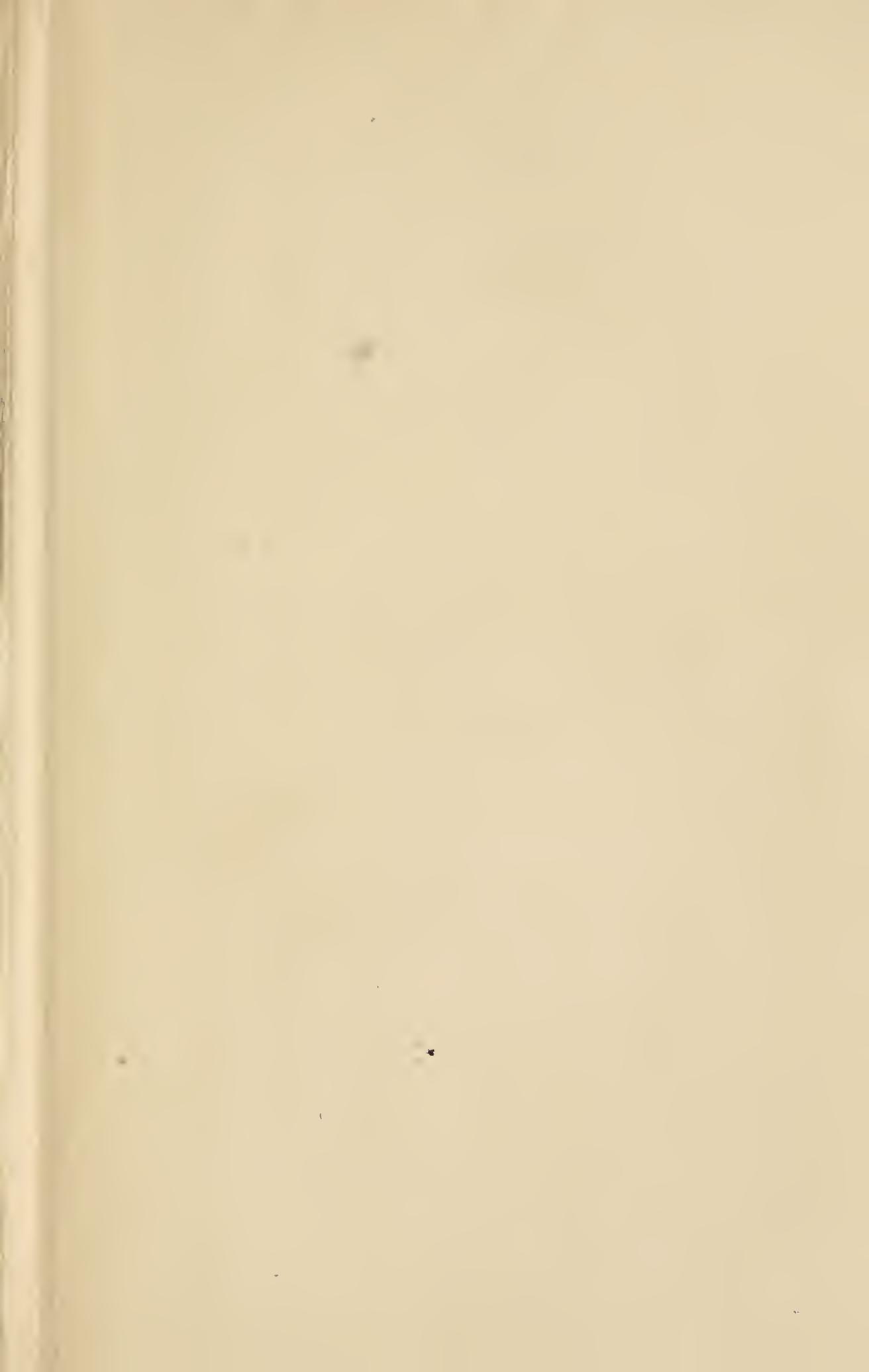


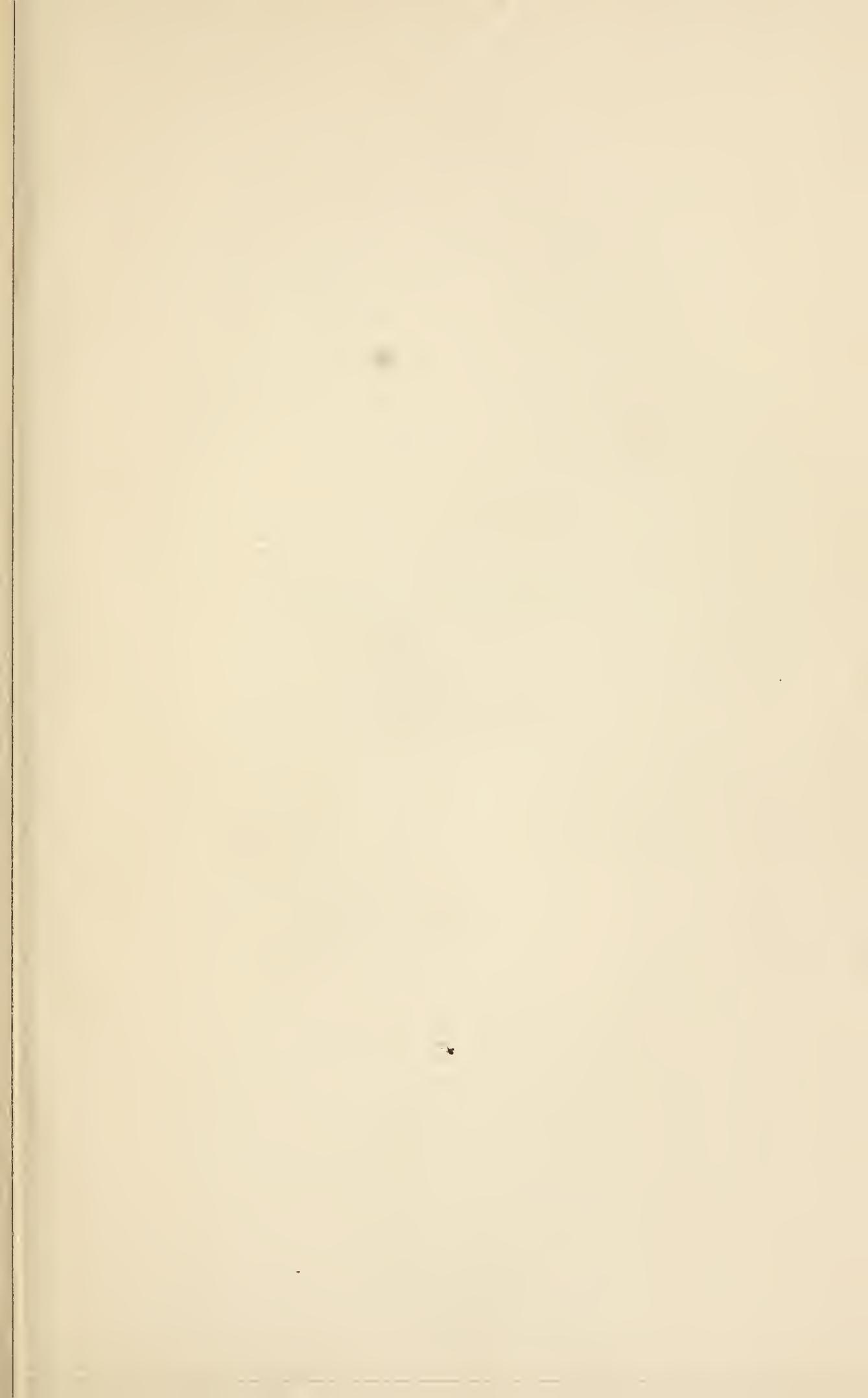


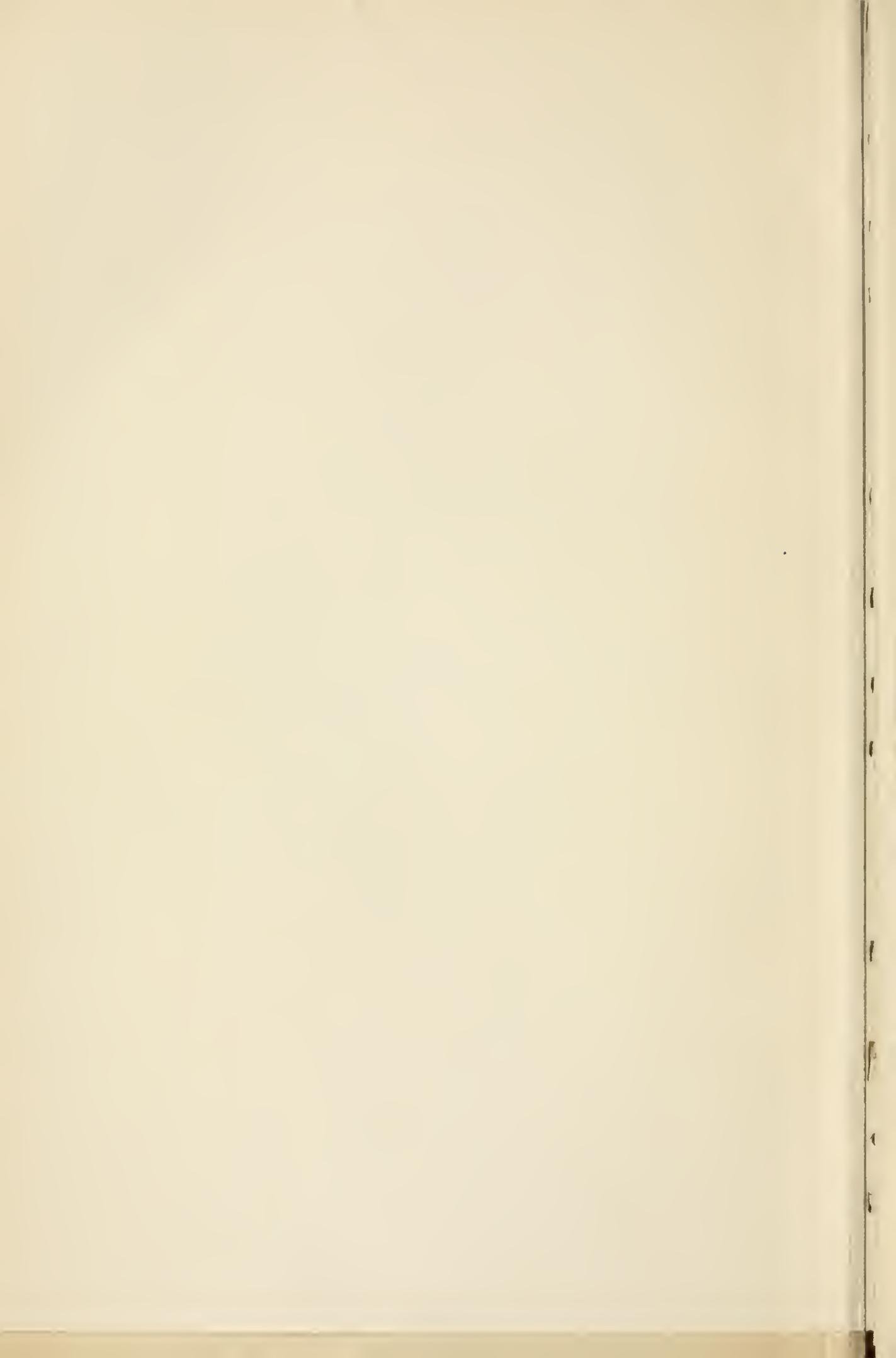
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BY

B. C. HARDY

AUTHOR OF "THE PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE," ETC.

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Where London's Tower its turrets show,
So stately by the Thames's side,
Fair Arabella, child of woe,
For many a day had sat and sighed.
And as she heard the waves arise,
And as she heard the bleak winds roar,
As fast did heave her heartfelt sighs,
And still so fast her tears did pour.

Old Ballad, supposed by Mickle.

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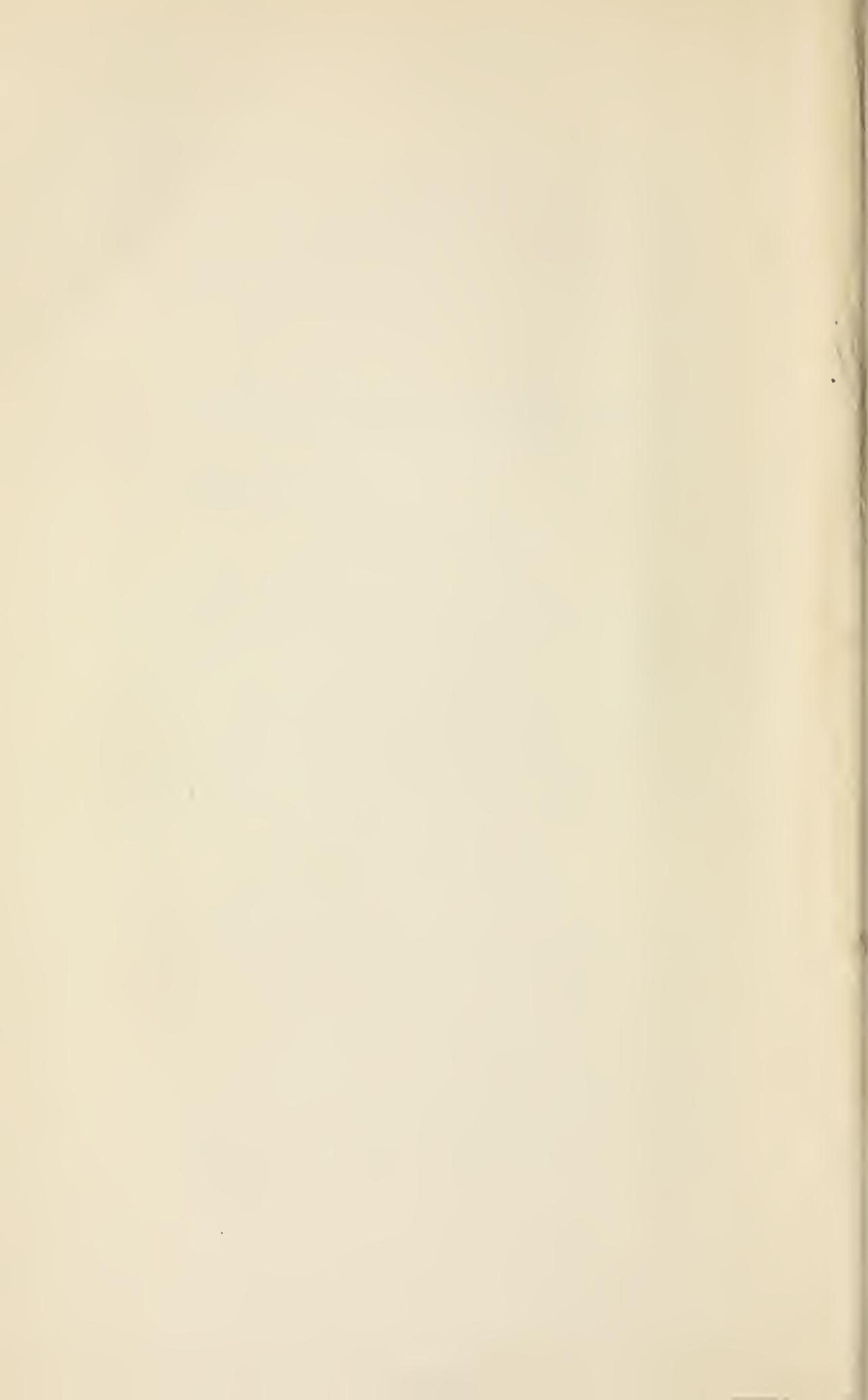
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ARBELLA STUART

CHAPTER I

MARGARET OF LENNOX

ONE evening in August 1587, a few months after the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and just a year before the defeat of the Spanish Armada, Queen Elizabeth gave a great supper-party to all her brilliant Court. A certain fair-haired little girl was seated close beside the Queen at the royal table and treated with singular honour, and in the course of the evening Elizabeth pointed this child out to Madame d'Aubespine de Châteauneuf, wife of the French Ambassador, with an evident desire for approval.

"She is very sweet and charming, your Grace," said the Ambassadors, "and speaks French exceedingly well."

"But I think more of her than that," replied the Queen. "One day she will be a woman to rule, and mistress here even as I am; I recognize much of myself in her. But," she added, with the indomitable Tudor pride, "I shall have been before her."

Yet Elizabeth proved no true prophet; for of all her loved and luckless House, perhaps Arbella Stuart's life was destined to be the most cruelly frustrated, and her death the most forlorn. Little ambitious herself for aught but love and a sheltered home, these always were denied her, and her innocent name as constantly made the centre for every disloyal and treasonable plot. It was no happiness in Tudor days to be born to royal blood; and since for seventy years after the death of Edward VI flaws were to be found in the title of every claimant to the throne, Arbella's name stood many times in perilous prominence as

a possible Queen of England. Indeed, had she chosen to take the smallest steps towards substantiating her claim, and, above all, had she yielded to the strong persuasion constantly exercised upon her to embrace the Roman Catholic faith, there is little doubt that her party, backed by powerful Continental influence, might easily have held its own against that of her Scottish cousin, James I. But her story does not begin here, and the complicated motives which so ruthlessly shaped and governed the events of her career were set in training many years before. It is necessary as shortly as possible to recapitulate these, in order to explain how she came to be placed in so prominent a position.

In the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Henry VIII, a statute was passed by which the King was allowed to dispose of the succession to his crown according to his pleasure. Acting upon this, in his last will, made four weeks before his death, he left his crown to his son Edward and that son's children, or in default of such to his "own heirs lawfully begotten of his entirely beloved wife Queen Catherine (Catherine Parr) or any other wife he might hereafter marry." "For lack of such issue and heirs" it was to descend to the Lady Mary and her heirs, and after her to Elizabeth and her heirs, on condition that both married with the consent of their brother or of the Council provided for his guardianship. If Henry's own descendants all failed, the family of his elder sister Margaret, Queen of Scotland, was to be passed over, and the right of succession to devolve upon his younger sister Mary, once Queen of France, and since then wife to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. Edward VI, as history knows, died unmarried, and immediately eight claimants were put forward to demand the crown. Curiously enough, in a country where no queen in her own right had ever reigned before, all but one of these were women, the exception being Philip II of Spain, who based his claim on a direct descent from John of Gaunt, whose daughter Catherine by his second wife had married Henry III of Castille. John of Gaunt being an older son of Edward III

than Edmund of Langley, through whom the Tudor house descended, Philip claimed that his right stood paramount; while the seven female claimants were—

The Princess Mary;

The Princess Elizabeth;

Frances, Duchess of Suffolk, eldest daughter of King Henry's youngest sister Mary, now dead;

Lady Jane Grey, eldest daughter of Frances, in whose favour she had in fact renounced her own rights;

Catherine Pole, great-granddaughter of George, Duke of Clarence;

Mary, Queen of Scots, only child of James V, son of King Henry's elder sister Margaret, Queen of Scotland (Mary was at this time a child of eight); and,

Lady Margaret Douglas, daughter of the same Margaret, Queen of Scotland, by a second marriage, but born in England, and therefore more eligible to succeed than her Scottish niece.

By Henry's will the princess Mary was the only rightful heir, but the King had long before pronounced her illegitimate at the time when he divorced her mother, a judgment which had never yet been set aside. To many people she was obnoxious in consequence of her religion, and these clung to her illegitimacy, and declared that therefore she could not inherit; while the same objection applied to Elizabeth, whom her father had also publicly disowned and never formally reinstated in her birthright. Those, therefore, who turned to Lady Jane Grey, eldest daughter of Frances, eldest daughter of Mary, Duchess of Suffolk, were only acting in accordance with what they considered the true interpretation of King Henry's will. Yet the other claimants, holding that the will could not be regarded as anything but a private expression of preference, considered their rights equally valid. Catherine Pole, it is true, had no very powerful party to support her; but the two ladies of the Scottish branch, which Henry in vain attempted to disregard, appeared likely to become more formidable rivals. All these different lines are somewhat confusing to follow, but it is important to disentangle them

in the beginning, and the accompanying table may serve to render them somewhat clearer.

If common-sense had not been triumphant in placing Henry's own two daughters successively upon the throne, certainly the descendants of his elder sister Margaret held the best claim. This Margaret had married James IV of Scotland, and borne him a son, afterwards James V, whose only child was that Mary, Queen of Scots, who shares with Helen of Troy and Cleopatra of Egypt the distinction of being the most enigmatic woman of her time. James IV fell at Flodden in 1513, and his young widow, Margaret of England, almost immediately afterwards married handsome Archibald Douglas, sixth Earl of Angus, by whom she had a daughter Margaret, born within the English border, who could therefore claim to be an English princess. The marriage quickly proved a miserable one, and was dissolved after twelve years of wretchedness at the Queen's desire; but the Pope inserted a special clause in the annulment to the effect that the daughter born of it was fully legitimate, the marriage being one *de facto* and *bona fide*. Cause for dissolving it was not far to seek, Angus having had a wife living at the time he wedded the Queen, while it is also asserted that she had contracted another marriage between the death of King James and her union with the Border Earl. This, however, was a not uncommon condition of things at the time. Should a Tudor lady choose to marry any noble, his previous matrimonial arrangements mattered not at all to her, and seem very seldom to have been considered any bar to the legality of her union. Indeed scarcely any royal or noble marriage of the period was without some similar flaw. Immediately on the annulment of her marriage with Angus, Queen Margaret married young Henry Stewart, whom she persuaded her son the King to create Lord Methven, and whom ten years later she also wished to divorce. This was not so easy to accomplish, however, and she herself died first. It is rather remarkable to note that Henry VIII and his two sisters made eleven marriages between them, and each left a partner young enough to marry again; while

Henry, who lived to be the oldest of the three, was only fifty-six when he died.

It will be seen, therefore, that the position of little Lady Margaret Douglas was not unassailable, and though, through all the unhappy bickerings of her childhood, she clung to her father's side and therefore earned the cordial dislike of her mother, that mother was glad enough to see the child at the age of fourteen made welcome at the court of her brother King Henry and sent to reside with her sister Mary, Duchess of Suffolk. After the Duchess Mary's death, Margaret was transferred to her cousin the Princess Mary at Beaulieu; till with the divorce of Katherine of Aragon, the disinheriting of Mary, and the rise of Anne Boleyn, the autocratic King sent for her to Court again, and granted her the post of first lady of honour to his infant daughter Elizabeth. A few years later Elizabeth too was branded as illegitimate; and then for a short time, until the birth of Prince Edward, Margaret Douglas was actually heiress presumptive to the throne, her half-brother James V being apparently debarred by the Alien Act, which forbade any child of whatsoever rank born outside the realm to succeed to any lands or property within it. Hot-blooded and quick of fancy like all the Tudors, Margaret chose this inauspicious moment to fall in love with Lord Thomas Howard, brother of the Duke of Norfolk, and a near relative to Anne Boleyn. It is almost certain that Anne herself, and so long as she was in favour King Henry also, had encouraged Howard to aspire to Margaret's hand; but now that the Queen and all her house had so fatally fallen into disgrace, and Margaret's own importance had risen so vastly in the scheme of English politics, no such inconsiderable match could be permitted, and the King's anger descended upon the lovers like a thunderbolt. Both were promptly despatched to the Tower, and an Act of Attainder passed upon Lord Thomas, who, it was asserted, "being led and seduced by the Devil," had "contemptuously and traitorously contracted himself by crafty, fair and flattering words to and with the Lady Margaret Douglas," by which, she being

daughter to the Queen of Scots, eldest sister to the King, it was suspected that he "might aspire by her to the Dignity of the Imperial Crown of this realm." The Act particularly points out the delinquent's "firm hope and trust that the subjects of this realm would incline and bear affection to the said Lady Margaret, being born in this realm, and not to the King of Scots her brother, to whom this realm hath nor ever had any affection, but would resist his attempt to the Crown of this realm to the uttermost of their powers," thus plainly showing the very strong feeling of the period against any foreign dynasty, even though, strictly speaking, nearer in blood. Finally, runs the Act, the unfortunate Lord Thomas "for his said offence, shall be attainted of high treason, and shall have and suffer such pains and execution of death to all intents and purposes as in cases of high treason"; and, further, "any man of what estate, degree or condition soever he be, who shall hereafter take upon him to espouse, marry, or take to his wife" any lady of the royal family without the King's consent under his great seal, shall be held guilty of high treason, and "the woman so offending" equally so, and subject to the same punishment. This is the earliest known Royal Marriage Act, and especially important here, since it was by it that Lady Margaret's grandchild, the unfortunate subject of this Memoir, came to her doom.

It was in the summer of 1536 that Margaret and Howard were sent to prison, and they never met again. It was never supposed that the extreme penalty of high treason would be inflicted upon either of them, but the Tower held other dangers than the axe. In a very short time both fell seriously ill of the low fever which hung about the insanitary rooms in which they were confined; and by November the King for very shame was obliged to permit his niece's removal to more nominal durance at Sion Convent on the Thames; whence, after the birth of his son Edward had considerably reduced her political importance, she was altogether released and restored to favour. Howard however remained in the Tower, and died of fever

in October of the following year. Margaret seems to have been genuinely fond of him, but like most ladies of her period was not inconsolable, and more than one later attachment is hinted at while she remained at Court. Another Howard, nephew of Lord Thomas, fell deeply in love with her, and Henry found it necessary to send Archbishop Cranmer to remonstrate with her, but experience had taught her prudence, and she made no more attempts at marriage or betrothal till, in 1544, when in her thirtieth year, the King bestowed her in marriage upon Matthew Stuart, fourth Earl of Lennox. Lennox was a Scottish noble of high lineage and related to the royal family, and it was partly in the hope of attaching him to the interests of England that Henry arranged the marriage, James V being now dead, and his infant daughter Mary Queen of Scotland. The married life of the pair proved a happy one; Lennox calls Margaret his "sweet Mage" in letters, and she bore him eight children, of whom only two survived. These were the second, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, and the youngest, Charles Stuart. Margaret remained a rigid Roman Catholic all her life, and consequently with the accession of Elizabeth fell somewhat out of favour; but although she never pushed her own claim to the throne, she never forgot her rights, and nursed in secret high ambitions for her children.

Mary Stuart, whose father had died when she was a week old, and who therefore reigned a queen from her cradle, had been married to the Dauphin of France at an early age, and became a widow in 1560 when only eighteen. She returned to her kingdom, and henceforth was the desired bride of every prince in Europe, no less on account of her personal fascination than because she was actually Queen of Scotland and next heir, as many considered, to Elizabeth of England, although Elizabeth herself would in no case admit this. The Earl and Countess of Lennox very early determined if possible to secure her for their eldest son Henry, Lord Darnley, who was some three years younger than Mary and a great fop, but a "hand-

some lang lad." The advantage of such a marriage would be that the two Scottish lines would thus be united, with a rival the less for each; and in spite of older and more attractive suitors, Mary seemed to smile upon her young cousin. Elizabeth however clung tenaciously to her privilege of allowing or disallowing the marriages of her subjects, and on receiving information of the projected alliance, sternly forbade it, clapped Lennox in the Tower, and sent his wife and two younger children to the custody of Sir Richard and Lady Sackville at Sheen. From here Margaret wrote to her cousin, humbling herself in the dust, and vowing solemnly that neither she nor her husband would ever permit their son to marry the Scottish Queen. In time Elizabeth forgave her, convinced of her sincerity, and released her husband from the Tower, but still refused to receive the couple at Court; and shortly after they retired to their estates at Settrington in Yorkshire. A year or two later, Lennox besought Burghley for permission to travel to Scotland with his eldest son to attend to some family affairs for which Darnley's signature was a necessity, and the great minister seems to have imagined no secret motive hidden behind the suggestion, and not only readily obtained the Queen's consent, but made use of the Earl as an agent to convey money, promises and jewels to persons at the Scottish Court. Margaret and her only remaining child, little Charles, now aged nine, stayed behind.

A rumour soon got abroad that Darnley was again in high favour with the Queen of Scots, and Elizabeth in alarm ordered the immediate return of Lennox and his son; but they were too wary to re-enter the trap. The ill-omened wedding of Mary and Darnley was solemnized in July 1565; and while Holyrood hummed with festivity the bridegroom's mother, the only scapegoat in Elizabeth's power, was hurried back to the Tower once more, and all her husband's property was confiscated. Personally the Queen seems to have felt some sympathy with her cousin, though obliged to keep her as a hostage. Margaret was never physically ill-treated; she was provided with well-

furnished rooms in the Lieutenant's house, and allowed two ladies, a maid, a gentleman and a yeoman to wait upon her; but her suspense and anxiety were great. From her husband and eldest son she heard little or nothing; they appeared to have forgotten her; and little Charles, always a sickly child, was left alone at Settrington. On the 23rd June the Archbishop of York writes to the Queen concerning the inquiries she had bade him make as to the Lennox estate; and adds that as Mr. Secretary had wished him not to take away Charles, the younger son, because he is sickly, he had stayed that point. "Here he is in health and at Settrington, where he has thirty servants; but some of them have been selling corn and sheep, etc., so it is uncertain how long they intend to stay. The house is in the open country, ten or twelve miles from the sea, where the Earl or Sir Richard Chamberlain have boats, by which Charles could easily be carried to Scotland, so this is not the place to keep him safely." On the 23rd August Sir Thomas Gargrave wrote to the Lord Treasurer concerning the inventory of the Lennox goods that the plate had been divided, and half sent to the Earl in Scotland and the rest was either with Lady Lennox or "here at Settrington, where Mr. Charles, the Earl's son lives, and the house is kept for him by the servants; but it is only a little salt, two bowls, and certain spoons." If this is to be seized, he asks what should become of Mr. Charles and the housekeeper; and probably in reply to this, by the beginning of September Elizabeth ordered Charles Vaughan and his wife Lady Knevet to go to Settrington and make themselves responsible for the boy's health and safety, "he being of tender years."

In June 1566 a son, afterwards James I of England, was born to Mary and Darnley, and Elizabeth sent such cheering information as she might to Margaret, to whom she bore no personal grudge. When, in the following February, Darnley came to his tragic death, his unhappy mother was immediately released. Lennox hurried back to his wife, and both were loud in their cries to Elizabeth to avenge them upon Mary, whom they held guilty of

their son's murder. The Queen was far too prudent to do anything of the kind; and even when, two years later, defeated and forsaken by her own people, Mary crossed the border and threw herself upon the mercy of her rival, Elizabeth did but place her in the polite but strict custody of the Earl of Shrewsbury, averring that there was insufficient evidence to prove her guilty of the crime. Nevertheless it pleased her that the Lennoxes should now stand so violently at enmity with the Queen of Scots; and they were quickly taken back into her favour, Margaret being appointed her chief lady, while Lennox was made regent for little James, now since his mother's abdication King of Scotland. In the end of 1571 however, Lennox was murdered at Stirling, with his last breath gasping out his "love to wife Meg, and God comfort her." Henceforth the unfortunate Margaret's sole interest in life was centred upon her last remaining child Charles.

In April 1572 the new Regent, the Earl of Mar, in King James's name conferred his father's earldom of Lennox unconditionally upon Charles Stuart and his heirs, and was officially thanked by Queen Elizabeth for so doing. If the title had not already been hereditary, therefore, this grant undoubtedly made it so, a matter to which it will be necessary to refer again later. Charles's education had been conducted in so unsettled a manner that it is scarcely surprising that at fifteen his mother declared she found him by no means easy to manage. Elizabeth commanded that he should be brought up as a Protestant, a command there was no gainsaying, although Margaret had clung so firmly to the religion of her youth that she found it a sore trial. She was however far too alive by now to the advantages of royal favour to cross the Queen's wish; and as a matter of fact Malliet, the Swiss tutor chosen for the young man, seems to have understood his character very well and guided him wisely and with discretion. Margaret's chief hope had been to have him taken into the household and under the protection of some powerful statesman, and she was anxious to place him thus with Lord Burghley, writing pathetic letters to this old friend to "bewraye a

special grief which long time and chiefly of late hath grown upon me through the bringing up of my only son Charles." She sighs that he is her "greatest dolour," and that through the absence of "that help of the father's company that his brother had . . . he is somewhat unfurnished of qualities needful, and I, being now a lone woman, am less able to have him well reformed at home than before." Malliet, however, who describes him as "the Earl of Lennox, brother to the King of Scots who was murdered, and uncle to the present one," says that "the youth is just entering on his sixteenth year, and gives great promise of hope for the future." He speaks with much confidence of him as "sole successor by hereditary right to the crown of Scotland, should his nephew die," and adds that "also no one is more nearly allied to the royal blood of England, after the death of the present Queen, than his mother, to whom her only son is heir"—a statement which demonstrates rather more the light in which the matter was regarded by the Lennox household than any public recognition of Charles's right. For more than two years mother, son and tutor lived quietly enough, however, at Margaret's old house at Hackney.

Her grandson the baby King of Scotland being beyond her guardianship, all Lady Lennox's hopes and ambitions lay now in forming an influential marriage for her youngest and last-left son. Elizabeth had always hated her cousin's connection with Mary of Scotland, had rejoiced in its violent termination, and though it is rather difficult to understand why, had always feared its renewal. Mary had been a state prisoner now since 1568 in the various houses of George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, and his wife, the redoubtable Bess of Hardwick. In the summer of 1570 she made an appeal to the mother of her husband Darnley to believe her innocent of his murder, but Margaret refused to listen, and spoke openly of her indignation at Mary's conduct. Yet it is certain that two years later some secret understanding obtained between these two women. When Margaret died in 1578, Mary wrote evidently in all good faith to her adviser the Archbishop of Glasgow that

“The Countess of Lennox, my mother-in-law, died about a month ago . . . This good lady was, thank God, in very good correspondence with me these five or six years bygone, and has confessed to me by sundry letters under her hand which I carefully preserve the injury she did me by the unjust pursuits which she allowed to go against me in her name, through bad information, but principally, she said, through the express orders of the Queen of England and the persons of her council, who took much solicitude that we might never come to a good understanding together. But as soon as she came to know of my innocence, she desisted from any further suit against me.”

After the hard experiences life had brought her, one realises that Margaret would never have risked so much as she certainly did in the dangers of such a reconciliation without some very good reason. Elizabeth was in poor health at the time, and it appeared not improbable that at any moment Mary might rise from captive to queen, when all those who had befriended her in trouble would receive due reward of favour and consideration. Charles, Earl of Lennox, her own brother-in-law, might become a person of great importance at her Court, favoured all the more in order to disprove the ugly stories concerning Darnley's death. James VI was a puny child too, and it was not improbable that he might never grow up. Great possibilities stretched before Charles Stuart, and there is no doubt his mother reckoned it worth staking her all upon this renewed friendship, secret though it must be kept. She herself, old, poor and with few friends, could never hope now for recognition of her own rights, unless through alliance with her more powerful niece. But correspondence with Mary was perilous in the extreme, and some means must be found of maintaining it in an apparently innocent manner. Shrewsbury's wife, the great Bess, had her own schemes and ambitions, and being for the moment upon extremely friendly terms with her captive guest, her plans fell in appositely enough with those of Lady Lennox.

One of the women who rise by sheer force of character from an insignificant position to stamp a name on history,

Elizabeth of Shrewsbury, "Bess of Hardwick," demands here some words of introduction to herself. The daughter of a simple country gentleman, with little dower but her own personality, handsome, capable and immensely energetic, she had been four times married to wealthy husbands who adored her and could refuse her nothing. The first, Mr. Robert Barlow, left her a widow at sixteen; by the second and best loved, Sir William Cavendish, she had ten children, of whom eight survived to make their advancement the one pressing object of her life; the third was Sir William Saintlow or St. Loe, Captain of the Guard to Queen Elizabeth and Grand Butler of England, as wife to whom she was much at Court, and was made confidant to the unhappy love affair between the Earl of Hertford and Lady Katherine Grey, sister of the Nine Days' Queen. Finally, at the age of fifty, she wedded the powerful Earl of Shrewsbury, and so dominated him by her will that he most unjustly disinherited his own children by a former marriage in favour of hers by Cavendish. Not content with this, she determined that her Cavendish brood should share yet more intimately in the glories of her fourth marriage, and insisted that her eldest son Henry should marry Lady Grace Talbot, Shrewsbury's daughter; while her own daughter Mary, a clever, shrewd girl much of the mother's type, was united to Gilbert Talbot, the Earl's second son and ultimately his successor. Another daughter, Frances Cavendish, was married to Sir Henry Pierrepont, but the youngest, Elizabeth, still remained at home when Mary of Scotland became the guest of the Shrewsburys; and this girl, a gentle, docile creature, swiftly (like many another) fell beneath the spell of that enchanting Queen. She protested herself ready to serve her lady in any way she might desire, and Mary in consequence loved and petted the girl and kept her constantly about her. Should Charles Stuart marry Elizabeth Cavendish, therefore, a simple and irrefragable means of communication between Mary and Margaret would be furnished; and after a lengthy correspondence on Mary's part with the Bishop of Ross, De Guaras, the Portuguese Minister Fogaça,

and other influential Catholics, it was decided that the marriage should take place. The young people themselves do not seem to have been much consulted, but it is easy to see what each of the plotting parties hoped to gain by it. Mary, the elimination of a possible claimant for her throne as well as documentary evidence of Margaret's friendship, necessarily implying her belief in the Queen's innocence; Margaret of Lennox, a safe and simple means of communication with all the great Catholic intrigues, and recognition of her own and her son's rights to the succession, together with the powerful support of the Shrewsburys; Lady Shrewsbury herself, a daughter married to a near heir of both English and Scottish thrones, and grandchildren of indubitably royal blood. It was asserted afterwards that the Earl of Shrewsbury was also in the plot, that he had sworn to Mary he would himself place the crown upon her head when Elizabeth died, and that Mary in return had promised never to leave his roof except as Queen of England: but it seems little likely that any truth lay in this. Shrewsbury was an honest man and on the whole steered very straightly a difficult course between loyalty to his Queen and courtesy to his dangerous guest, complicated as that course was by the various intrigues—known, unknown or suspected—of his clever and restless wife.

It is evident that Lady Lennox regarded Elizabeth Cavendish as the merest pawn, useful for the moment and easily to be got rid of when opportunity offered for Charles to make a more splendid marriage; but she was careful that the girl's mother should not suspect this. Experience had made Margaret crafty, and it is probable that in her Bess of Hardwick had at last met her match. But *l'homme propose et Dieu dispose*. For the present the difficulty was to accomplish this marriage as though it were a spontaneous love affair, carried through upon the spur of the moment against the wishes and better judgment of parents and guardians; and so cleverly was this contrived that through all the centuries since the mating of this pair has been almost universally looked

upon as one of the few genuine idylls of history. As a first step, Lady Lennox asked and obtained permission to travel with her son to their estate of Settrington in Yorkshire, and thence perhaps to Scotland, to visit her grandson, little King James. Elizabeth agreed to this, but on Margaret hinting that she might be invited to meet her friend Katherine, Lady Suffolk, at Chatsworth, where Mary Stuart was at that time living, "I perceived Her Majesty misliked of it"; she wrote afterwards to the Earl of Leicester . . . "and she prayed me not, lest it be thought I should agree with the Queen of Scots. And I asked Her Majesty if she could think so, for I was made of flesh and blood and could never forget the murder of my child. And she said, 'Marry by her faith she could not think so, that ever I could forget it, for if I would I were a devil.'" Obviously Elizabeth did not altogether trust her cousin, and, as we have seen, with good cause.

Chatsworth, however, was not necessary to the plot, and the name was probably only thrown out as a feeler by Margaret to see how the Queen would take it. On the 9th October, 1574, Lady Lennox and the young Earl started north, and stayed a few days on their way at Huntingdon with the above-mentioned Lady Suffolk, whom Charles Brandon had married three months after the death of his royal wife the Duchess Mary. Katherine Willoughby had been his ward for four years before, and it was probably whilst Margaret Douglas was also spending her youth at her aunt's house that the two became friends. Charles Brandon himself had died in 1545, and Katherine had afterwards married Mr. Bertie, to whose son Bess of Hardwick had already unsuccessfully tried to wed her daughter Elizabeth. The Shrewsburys had another country house at Rufford, no great distance away, where the Countess took care to be staying with her pretty daughter; and when the Lennox party left Huntingdon, she met them on their way to Sheffield, and begged them so hospitably to stop a night with her first that, as Margaret wrote in the same letter to Leicester, Rufford

being "not one mile out of my way, yea, and a much fairer way, as is well to be proved, and my lady meeting me herself upon the way, I could not refuse it, being near thirty miles from Sheffield."

Arrived at Rufford, old Lady Lennox was taken conveniently ill, and remained shut up in her room for five days, that being the least time in which the young couple could be presumed to form a lasting attachment. There is no reason to suppose that Charles and Elizabeth were indifferent to one another, and they seem, indeed, to have become very genuinely attached; but at the same time undoubted evidence proves the whole affair to have been arranged beforehand: and the way in which the marriage was now hurried on shows the anxiety of all parties that the Queen should hear no word of it till prevention was too late. Certainly they were wedded by the beginning of November, and on the 17th of that month the regal thunderbolt fell. Peremptory orders arrived that all parties to the marriage should return at once to London and answer to Elizabeth for taking so important a step without her knowledge and consent.

A shower of letters of excuse and explanation was immediately rained upon the Queen and her chief advisers, Lord Burghley and Lord Leicester, by all concerned. From that of Lady Lennox to Leicester we have already quoted; the Earl of Shrewsbury, who had probably been quite as well hoodwinked as everybody else, wrote early in November that "The Lady Lennox, being as I heard sickly, rested her at Rufford five days, and kept most her bedchamber. And in that time the young man her son fell into liking with my wife's daughter before intended, and such liking was between them as my wife tells me she makes no doubt of a match, and hath so tied themselves upon their own liking as cannot part. My wife hath sent him to my lady, and the young man is so far in love that belike he is sick without her. This taking effect, I shall be well at quiet, for there is few noblemen's sons in England that she hath not prayed me to deal for at one time or other, for my Lord Wharton and sundry

others. And now this comes unlooked-for without thanks to me." To Elizabeth herself Shrewsbury wrote, "May it please your Majesty, I understand of late your Majesty's displeasure is set gainst my wife, for marriage of her daughter to my Lady Lennox son. I must confess to your Majesty, as true it is, that it was dealt in suddenly, and without my knowledge; but as I dare undertake and insure to your Majesty, for my wife, she finding her daughter disappointed of young Bartè, where she hoped, and that other young gentleman was inclined to love with a few days' acquaintance, did her best to further her daughter to this match, without having therein any other intent or respect than with reverent duty towards your Majesty she ought. . . . But as I have always found your Majesty my good and gracious sovereign, so do I comfort myself that your wisdom can find out right well what causes move them thereunto, and therefore I am not afraid of any doubtful opinion or displeasure to remain with your Majesty of me, or of my wife, whom your highness and your council have many ways tried in times of most danger. We never had thought or respect but as your Majesty's most true and faithful servants, and so do truly serve and faithfully love and honour your Majesty."

This is the language of an honest man, and no doubt Shrewsbury believed every word he wrote, but the Queen had less trust of her sex. Meanwhile bride and groom, with their respective mothers, trembling but triumphant, journeyed slowly and with difficulty to London. The floods were out, and it was the 10th December before the Lennox party reached the house at Hackney, where they remained under arrest till after Christmas, while Lady Shrewsbury was ordered to her husband's town house under the same conditions. Elizabeth left the young people contemptuously alone, but immediately after Christmas the two arch-plotters were ordered to the Tower: a new sensation for Lady Shrewsbury, but no novelty to the aged Margaret. "Thrice have I been cast into prison," she exclaimed as she once more passed those dismal gates, "not for matters of treason, but for love matters. First, when Thomas Howard, son to Thomas,

first Duke of Norfolk, was in love with myself; then for the love of Henry Darnley, my son, to Queen Mary of Scotland; and lastly, for the love of Charles, my younger son, to Elizabeth Cavendish."

An official inquiry into the whole matter was ordered under the Earl of Huntingdon, greatly to the disgust of all concerned, since both Shrewsbury and Mary hated Huntingdon, who was always likely to supersede Shrewsbury in his office as Mary's gaoler. A rigid examination of the Lennox household, however, and particularly of the Countess's trusted steward, Thomas Fowler, elicited no evidence of a prearranged plot, and the secret was well kept. La Mothe Fénelon, the Spanish Ambassador, writes at the time that he feared this marriage might estrange Mary from the Shrewsburys, and was surprised to find the contrary happen, from which it is evident that nothing had been made known to him; and by March the two Countesses were acquitted of "large treasons" and permitted to return to their homes. Lady Shrewsbury went to Sheffield and thence to Buxton to recover from the effects of her imprisonment; while Margaret Lennox returned to the old house at Hackney, where her son and his wife awaited her, and where the little party, very poor and out of favour, still distrusted and ignored by the Court, dwelt quietly till well on into the summer. Gilbert Talbot, writing to his father about this time, mentions a friend, one Mr. Tyndall, who "was at Hackney, where he found them there well. And I trust very shortly that the dregs of all misconstruction will be wiped away, that their abode there after this sort will be altered."

Certainly pretty, gentle Elizabeth Cavendish had gained little yet by her semi-royal marriage: but she was sister-in-law to her adored Queen, and the birth of her child, perhaps destined to wear two crowns, was expected in the early autumn. For her confinement she returned to Chatsworth in order to be in her mother's care; and here (probably some time in September, though the exact date is not known), in the year 1575, that long-looked-for child of promise, heir to the house of Lennox, was born. And the child was a girl.

CHAPTER II

THE CHILDHOOD OF ARBELLA STUART, 1575-82

THE baby was christened Arbella, and her name is always spelt thus ; though in the days of her Court life under her cousin James she herself changed her signature from Arbella Stewart to the more romantic form of Arbella Stuart. Her baptism most probably took place at the small parish church of Edensor, where all such family ceremonies of the Cavendishes were performed, although no record of it remains ; and her two chief sponsors were her uncle and aunt, Gilbert and Mary Talbot, always henceforth her good friends and guardians throughout life. History does not relate if the two families were disappointed at the sex of the infant, and possibly they quickly realized that while this was no bar to her inheritance, a girl was easier to educate in seeming obscurity than a boy. Besides, Arbella might have a troop of brothers yet. So on the whole the child of many hopes born at Chatsworth that autumn of 1575 received a warm welcome, and great things were prophesied for her future.

By the 10th of November the young Countess and her baby were back at Hackney, for on that date we have a letter from her mother-in-law Margaret to Queen Mary, evidently in reply to some kind message, which, short though it is, breathes triumph and satisfaction in every line. She closes—

“And now must I yield your Majesty most humble thanks for your good remembrance and bounty to our little daughter here, who some day may serve your highness. Almighty God grant unto your Majesty an happy life.—Hackney, this 10th of November.

“Your Majesty’s most humble and loving mother and
aunt,

“M. L.”

To this the adoring little Countess Elizabeth adds—

“ I most humbly thank your Majesty that it pleased your highness to remember me, your poor servant, both with a token and in my lady’s gracious letter, which is not little to my comfort. I can but wish and pray God for your Majesty’s long and happy estate till time I may do your Majesty better service, which I think long to do, and shall always be as ready thereto as any servant your Majesty hath, according as by duty I am bound. I beseech your highness pardon these rude lines, and accept the good heart of the writer, who loves and honours your Majesty unfeignedly.

“ Your Majesty’s most humble and lowly servant during life,
“ E. LENNOX.”

But the ill-luck of the Stuarts was never more evidenced than in this matter of the Lennox marriage. There were no more children; and in April 1576, when Arbella was some eighteen months old, her young father Charles died of a rapid consumption. A few months earlier Mary, Queen of Scots, who always regarded her abdication as forced upon her and herself still as reigning Queen, had drafted a will by which she named for her successor to the crowns of England and Scotland either Charles Lennox or Lord Claud Hamilton, “ whichever should serve her most faithfully and be most constant in religion, should her son James persist in his heresy,” while at the same time she restored to old Lady Lennox all rights in her father’s earldom of Angus. Her legal power to do this might be disputed, but many held to it staunchly, and at least her will and approval counted for much. Now all seemed wasted; but, indomitably ambitious still, the aged Margaret built for the future all her hopes upon her infant grandchild; and only a few days after her son’s death wrote with her own hand to Lord Ruthven to request that the administration of the Lennox estates be placed in her hands during Arbella’s minority. It will be remembered that in 1572 the earldom had been settled upon Charles and his heirs for ever, without restriction, by the Regent

Mar and the Council of Scotland, ratified by an Act of Parliament: but not only was Lady Lennox's petition now refused, but the child's own claim to the title called in question. Objections were raised and prevarications made; it was stated that the heiress being a minor, the gift fell back into the King's hands until she should be eighteen years of age, and furthermore that "The same gift of the earldom, made by the Earl of Mar, then Regent, under the great seal of Scotland, and also by Act of Parliament, may by the King be revoked at any time, either within age or at full age." The looked-for revoking followed quickly enough upon this announcement, and it was known to all that James and his advisers intended to bestow the earldom upon his handsome cousin Esmé Stuart, Lord D'Aubigny, to whom, as some mild compensation, it was suggested that Arbella, when of due age, might be married. It was in the highest degree improbable that Elizabeth would permit any such marriage, and the whole scheme was distinctly nebulous; but meanwhile, D'Aubigny being still in France, the earldom was granted to the aged and childless Bishop of Caithness, kinsman of Arbella's father, on the distinct understanding that he should renounce it whenever the King wished. This happened in 1581, when D'Aubigny, as expected, received it. The Queen of England professed herself mightily indignant at this disinheriting of Charles Stuart's baby daughter; but at the same time she herself lost no time in seizing the estates her father, Henry VIII, had conferred upon Margaret of Lennox's husband and children. The Lennox family was now in extremest poverty, and the old Countess, as ever, overburdened with debt. Countess Elizabeth and her daughter seem chiefly to have lived with her at the old house at Hackney; but probably paid also long and frequent visits to some of the great Shrewsbury houses, where they must have enjoyed the wealth and luxury surrounding Elizabeth's mother and her family. Here, too, the Queen of Scots grew to love and take much pleasure in her baby niece. Arbella was a very pretty child, a good deal prettier than when she grew up: and



ARBELLA STUART
Aged nearly Two years

she had always very engaging manners. A delightful portrait was painted of her just before she was two, and it hangs still in Hardwick House. The solemn little baby face with hair coiffed grown-up fashion under a Marie Stuart cap banded with jewels, the clear blue eyes and golden-red hair, the childish figure tucked into the voluminous brocaded dress of the period, the great jewel hung round her neck showing the device of a heart, a coronet, and the motto "Pour Parvenir J'Endure," all present a rather pathetic contrast to what is evidently the real interest of the occasion to Arbella. She had refused to be parted from her doll, a stiff lady in full Elizabethan garb, and she comes down to us through the centuries, clutching that cherished possession, a silent dogged little figure, patiently enduring all the squabbles and intrigues that surged about her childhood and girlhood, and unspoiled still by the petting and flattery of all her complicated aunts and uncles of the house of Shrewsbury. Her two grandmothers still looked upon her, in spite of all opposing circumstances, as the future queen of two realms; and no efforts were spared by them to restore to her both the English and Scottish titles and estates of which she had been so unjustly dispossessed.

The Earl of Leicester was a particular friend of both Lady Lennox and Lady Shrewsbury, and to him they made constant appeals for help. High in favour with the Queen as he stood, however, he found it wise to move cautiously in this matter. Elizabeth was ready enough to blame James and his advisers for their action with regard to the Lennox earldom, but she was equally resolved never to give up the English estates, urging that even if she did so, James would have a better right to them than Arbella, he being the only child of Lady Lennox's elder son, and Arbella the only child of the younger. Here, however, the Act forbidding those born without the realm to inherit lands within it might reasonably have been supposed to take effect, and the energy with which Elizabeth refused on this particular occasion to give ear to it wakes a doubt of her sincerity in the matter. She told James that it

was his business to pay his grandmother's debts and take charge of his infant cousin, and that he could well afford to do it out of the Lennox estates: but to this statement James would pay no attention whatever.

In the height of the discussion old Lady Lennox died suddenly at Hackney. Leicester went down to talk over business affairs with her one day in the first week of March 1578; he stopped to dine, and immediately after dinner she was taken gravely ill. Two days later her troubled life was over. "She was a matron of singular piety, patience and modesty," says Camden: and to her faults posterity must be lenient, recognizing the difficulties of her position and of her age. She died deeply in debt, possessing nothing but some jewels, which she left to Arbella: while Elizabeth for very shame paid for a magnificent funeral and a handsome monument to her cousin in Westminster Abbey. Charles Stuart had been buried in the same vault two years before; and he and his brother Darnley, the latter with a crown above his head, are represented kneeling in armour beside the alabaster effigy of their mother. The crown has long since been broken away, but amongst the claims to renown set forth upon her tomb Margaret of Lennox is mentioned as "having to son Henry I of Scotland," by which title few will recognize the brief-lived and somewhat inglorious Darnley. Small figures of her other children, all of whom died young, kneel behind Henry and Charles upon the monument.

With respect to Arbella's legacy, the State Papers record—

"My Lady Margaret's Grace committed her casket with jewels into the hands of Mr. Thomas Fowler, to be delivered to the Lady Arbella at the age of fourteen.

1. A jewel set with a fair table diamond, a table ruby, and an emerald with a fair great pearl.
2. A cross all set with fair table diamonds, with a square linked chain.
3. A jewel set with a ballast, and a fair table diamond set beneath it.
4. A H of gold set with rock ruby.

5. A burrish set with a fair diamond.
6. A rose set with fair diamonds.
7. A carcanet set with table diamonds.
8. A girdle set with table diamonds.
9. A border set with table diamonds.
10. A border set with table rubies.
11. A border set with rock emeralds.
12. A table, the head of gold set with diamonds.
13. A fair pearl chain.
14. A chain set with rock rubies, pillar-wise.
15. A chain of small turquoise set upon a three-square pillar.
16. A clock set in crystal, with a wolf of gold upon it.
17. Buttons of rock rubies to set a gown.
18. Table diamonds to set upon sleeves.
19. Two tablets of gold, the one with two agates, with divers small turquoises the other.
20. Enamelled the form of a globe.

21. Bracelets two pair : one of agate, and the other of plain gold, with other things that be not yet in memory."

Arbella never seems to have received these jewels. Thomas Fowler was left sole executor to the will, and should she die before the age of fourteen, they were to go to James. Mary Stuart, however, seems to have regarded herself as capable of overriding all wills and wishes; and in September of the year following Margaret of Lennox's death, she issued the following warrant: "To all people be it knowne that we Marie, be the grace of God Queene of Scotland, dowagier of France, doo will and require Thomas Fowler, soole executor to our dearest mother-in-lawe and aunt, the lady Margaret, countess of Lennox deceased, to deliver into the hands and cowstody of our right well beloved cousin Elizabeth, contess of Shrewsbury, all and every such juells as the said Lady Margaret before her death delivered and committed in charge to the said Thomas Fowler for the use of the lady Arbella Stewart, her graund chyld, if God send her lyf till fourteen years of age; if not then, for the use of our deare and only sonne the prince of Scotland. In witness that this is owre will and

desire to the said Fowler we have given the present under our own hand at Sheffield Manor, the XIX of September, the year of our Lord MD threescore and nyneteenth, and of our reyne the thretty sixth." The poor lady's wishes counted in effect for very little, but in the tedium of her imprisonment and failing health, her passion for intrigue could spend itself only thus in phantom gifts and visionary commands. She was constantly issuing peremptory orders about matters that concerned her not in the least, and in the present case she had of course no power whatever to upset the provisions of her aunt's will, and Fowler naturally paid not the slightest attention to her warrant. Immediately on his mistress's death he travelled straight to Scotland, where he became a trusted servant of James, to whom, being very rich, he constantly lent money. One day a party of marauders, headed by the Earl of Bothwell, broke into his house and stole the jewels. Hue and cry was raised and all were recovered, together with the inventory, and given over to the young King for safety. Twelve months later the Jews had the whole; that at least is how the story goes; but Arbella having no claim to them at present, the whole matter fell into abeyance for some years.

With regard to the child's own rights Queen Mary seems to have thought the Lennox estates due to her, but that her own son James should have the English ones. She had signed a will in 1577 in which she distinctly states that "*Je faitz don à Arbelle ma niepce du comté de Lennox, tenu par feu son père, et commande a mon filz comme mon heritier et successeur d'obeyr en cest endroit à ma volonté.*" Immediately on Lady Lennox's death Queen Elizabeth announced her intention of taking Arbella into her own wardship, a statement apparently well received by the child's relatives. Mary herself wrote to Monsieur de Glasgow, "The Countess of Lennox, my mother-in-law, died about a month ago, and the Queen of England has taken into her care her ladyship's granddaughter. I desire those who are about my son to make instances in his name for this succession, not for any desire I have that

he should actually succeed to it, but rather to testify that neither he nor I ought to be reputed or treated as foreigners in England who are both born within the same isle." This was making a test case of the matter, and it is one of the few in which James and his mother were fully at accord. In July 1578, four months after Lady Lennox's death, the Abbot of Dunfermline was sent to the English Court to demand for the King of Scots the English estates of his grandmother; and Elizabeth, as was expected, made great play with the Alien Act. The estates were left to Charles and his heirs male, she said, therefore Arbella could not have them: but equally, James being born across the border, he could not inherit them either: therefore they reverted to the crown. These particular estates were of no especial consequence, but the real point at issue was James's right to the succession of the English crown, should Elizabeth never marry; a right which would be affected by precisely the same considerations. It was left, as Elizabeth intended it should be, entirely vague: but meanwhile she professed herself extremely indignant at the Lennox title and estates being snatched thus from their rightful inheritress. Burghley was appealed to by Arbella's mother, and did his utmost for her, but without avail. Her artless little letter of thanks to the great Lord Treasurer is very touching—

"I can but yield your lordship most hearty thanks for your continual goodness towards me and my little one, and specially for your lordship's late good dealing with the Scots ambassador for my poor child's right, for which, as also sundry other ways, we are for ever bound to your lordship, whom I beseech still to further that cause as to your lordship may seem best. I can assure your lordship the Earldom of Lennox was granted by Act of Parliament to my lord, my late husband, and the heirs of his body, so that they should offer great wrong in seeking to take it from Arbella; which I trust by your lordship's good means will be prevented, being of your mere goodness for justice sake so well disposed thereunto. For all which your

lordship's goodness (as I am bound) I rest in heart more thankful than I can anyways express. I take my leave of your lordship, whom I pray God long to preserve. At Newgate Street, the XV of August,

“Your lordship, as I am bounden,
“E. LENNOX.”

“Upon my advertisement to my lady, my mother, of the infection at Chelsey (from whence I would at the first have removed if I had known any fit place), though the danger was not great, she hath commanded me presently to come hither for want of a more convenient house.”

The Earl of Shrewsbury also wrote to Leicester to beg his persuasion with the Queen for further remonstrance: “Unless the Queen will write in most earnest sort to the King of Scots in her little ward's behalf,” he says, . . . “we cannot but be in some despair. . . . The Bishop of Caithness is an old, sickly man without a child; and I think it is done that D'Aubigny, being in France and the next heir male, should succeed him. My wife says that the old Lady Lennox told her long ago of D'Aubigny's seeking to prevent the infant.” But neither Burghley, Leicester nor Elizabeth herself were successful in wresting recognition from the Scottish Court. There is something almost comic in the rival sovereigns thus tearing the unfortunate little girl's property to pieces between them, and each seizing a share with plausible explanations, while calling Christendom to execrate the rapacity of the other. When it became quite evident that a checkmate had been arrived at, however, Elizabeth had the grace to unbend to a certain extent. She had avowed her intention of protecting Arbella, and she could not allow the child to starve, or even, being in fact a princess of the house of Tudor, to remain dependent upon the private charity of her mother's family. It is probable that the Queen already foresaw in Arbella a useful rival to James for her crown, and determined to keep her well within her power. At any rate, while still denying her right to the estates, she settled a pension of £400 a year upon the young Countess of Lennox

during her lifetime, and £200 a year upon her child. This provision, while not princely, was yet at that period a very comfortable allowance, and since Elizabeth and Arbella lived quietly with the Shrewsbury family, it furnished ample for their needs. Gilbert Talbot, the Earl's second son, Arbella's godfather, and ever a great courtier, reports to his father and stepmother that "On May Day I told the Queen that you both thought yourselves most bounden to her for her most gracious dealing toward your daughter, my Lady of Lennox; and that you assuredly trusted in the continuance of her favourable goodness to her and her daughter. And she answered that she always found you more thankful than she gave cause."

Old Lord Shrewsbury seems to have thought, however, that the Queen might do more, and probably instigated by his wife, wrote to implore that his stepdaughter might have "in farm" the estates of her late mother-in-law, paying rent to the Crown, and making the best she could of the timber, pastures, etc., of the parks. But on the 21st January, 1582, after a very short illness, gentle Elizabeth Lennox passed away from the troubles of this world, and Arbella, with all her dangerous heritage of blood and temperament, was left an orphan at seven years old. The young Countess was buried at Sheffield, where she died; and her stepfather, who, like all who knew her, was tenderly attached to her, wrote the sad news at once to the Lords Burghley and Leicester. "My very good Lords, it hath pleased God to call to His mercy, out of this transitory world, my daughter Lennox, this present Sunday, being the 21st of January, about three of the clock in the morning. Both towards God and the world she made a most godly and good end, and was in most perfect memory all the time of her sickness, even to this last hour. Sundry times did she make her most earnest and humble prayer to the Almighty for her Majesty's most happy estate, and the long and prosperous continuance thereof, and, as one most infinitely bound to her highness, humbly and lowly beseeched her Majesty to have pity upon her poor orphan, Arbella Stuart, and, as at all times heretofore, both the mother and

poor daughter was most infinitely bound to her Highness, so her assured trust was that her Majesty would continue the same accustomed goodness and bounty to her child she left. . . . I thought it my part to signify to both your lordships in what sort God hath called her to His mercy, which I beseech you make known to her Majesty, and thus, with my very hearty commendations to both your good lordships, I cease."

He wrote the same news to Sir Francis Walsingham, adding that, "To you, my daughter in her life, and her infant, the Lady Arbella Stuart, hath been very much bound. I pray you so now, like a good friend, after her death, be you a mean to her Majesty, to present my daughter Lennox's humble and lowly thanks to her Majesty, with her prayer for the long and happy estate of her Majesty. And for her Majesty's goodness at all times extended towards her and her poor orphan, who now is left altogether destitute, which might have greatly increased my daughter's grief if she had not had a most assured trust of her Majesty's most bountiful goodness and great compassion to all who stand in need of help and comfort. The poor mother, my wife, takes my daughter's death so grievously and so mourneth and lamenteth that she cannot think of aught but tears, and therefore the rather I thought good to signify thus much unto you, and request your favour in this sort."

Orphaned thus early, and robbed of her rights on every hand, Arbella Stuart counted yet a powerful protector in her maternal grandmother. Bess of Hardwick was tenderly attached to all her children; it was the one real passion of her life, and she mourned her gentle Elizabeth deeply and sincerely; but nevertheless one realises the thrill with which she found herself now sole guardian and arbiter of destiny to the future Queen of England. There was never any question in the Shrewsbury household that Arbella was rightful heir to the kingdom; and though far too wary to press the point unduly, the redoubtable Countess hints pretty broadly at it in the letters she wrote to Burghley and Walsingham one short week only after her daughter's death. To Burghley her letter runs—

“MY HONOURABLE GOOD LORD,

“Your lordship hath heard by my Lord how it hath pleased God to visit me; but in what sort soever His pleasure is to lay His heavy hand on us we must take it thankfully. It is good reason His holy will should be obeyed. My honourable good Lord, I shall not need here to make long recital to your Lordship how that in all my greatest matters I have been singly bound to your Lordship for your Lordship’s good and especial favour to me; and how much your Lordship did bind me, the poor woman that is gone, and my sweet jewel, Arbella, at our last being at Court, neither the mother during her life nor I can ever forget, but most thankfully acknowledge it; and so I am well assured will the young babe when her riper years will suffer her to know her best friends. And now my good Lord, I hope her Majesty upon my most humble suit will let that portion which her Majesty bestowed upon my daughter and jewel Arbella remain wholly to the child for her better education. Her servants that are to look to her, her masters that are to train her up in all good learning and virtue, will require no small charges, wherefore my earnest request to your Lordship is so to recommend this my humble suit to her Majesty as it may soonest and easiest take effect, and I beseech your Lordship to give my son, William Cavendish, leave to attend on your Lordship about this matter. And so referring myself, my sweet jewel Arbella, and the whole matter to your honourable and friendly consideration, I take my leave of your Lordship, beseeching your Lordship pardon me that I am not able to write to you with my own hand.

“Your Lordship’s most assured loving friend,

“ELIZABETH SHREWSBURY.”

To Walsingham she wrote very similarly. The £400 a year allowed as a life pension to Elizabeth Lennox lapsed of course with her death, and Lady Shrewsbury was anxious to obtain a promise of its continuance for the better education of Arbella, whose own £200 would not go very far now that she was approaching an age when the

best masters for all manner of accomplishments should be furnished for her. A clever and well-educated young lady in good society at this period was expected to be not only extremely well read, and conversant with all the ancient philosophers, but also to speak several modern tongues, to sing, play, dance, ride, and even to compose and write verses herself. Since little Arbella already gave evidence of an intelligence above the average, it would have been cruel to deprive her of any possible advantage. Bess did not mean to do it, but she would make the Queen pay for it if she could, and no satisfactory answer being returned to her appeals, she wrote again a few months later, in May, to Walsingham, begging him "to prefer my humble suit into the Queen's Majesty in the behalf of a poor infant, my jewel Arbella, who is to depend wholly upon her Majesty's bounty and goodness, being in her tender age deprived of her parents, whose late mother in her extreme sickness, and even at the approaching of her end (which I cannot without great grief remember), did most earnestly sundry times recommend to her Majesty's gracious goodness and favour that poor infant her only care."

To Burghley, writing in the same strain, she continues: "I assuredly trust to her Majesty's most gracious goodness, who never denied me any suit, but by her most bountiful and gracious favours every way hath so much bound me, as I can never think myself able to discharge my duty in all faithful service to her Majesty. I wish not to live after I shall willingly fail in any point thereof to the best of my power. And as I know your Lordship hath especial care for the ordering of her Majesty's revenues and of her estate every way, so trust I you will consider of the poor infant's case, who under her Majesty is to appeal only to your Lordship for succour in all her distresses; who, I trust, cannot dislike of this my suit in her behalf, considering the charges incident to her bringing up. For although she were everywhere her mother was during her life, yet can I not now like she should be here or in any place else where I may not sometimes see her and daily hear of her, and

therefore charged with keeping house where she must be with such as is fit for her calling, of whom I have special care, not only such as a natural mother hath of her best beloved child, but much more greater in respect how she is in blood to her Majestie, albeit one of the poorest, as depending wholly of her Majesty's gracious bounty and goodness, and being now upon VI yeres and very apt to learn and able to conceive what shall be taught her. The charge will so increase as I doubt not her Majesty will conceive the nyne hondred pounds yearly to be little enough, which as your L. knoweth is but as so much in money, for that the lands be in lease, and no further commodity to be looked for during the few years of the child's minority. All which I trust your L. will consider and say to her Majesty what you shall think thereof; and so most heartily wish your good Lordship well to do."

But the Queen's interest in the child had dwindled for the moment, and, knowing the private wealth of the Shrewsburys, she considered the £200 was quite sufficient. There was a certain estate named Smallwood, which had belonged to Margaret of Lennox, of which Arbella seems to have retained possession, since lawsuits concerning it are mentioned several times during her life; but this, together with the small allowance and her vague expectations, were all with which the little girl started her independent career in life. The revenue from Smallwood was probably reckoned in the "nyne hondred pounds" for which her grandmother hoped. Lady Shrewsbury still insisted, however, that the child should be styled and treated as Countess of Lennox; and the inscription "Arbella Stuarta Comtissa Leonix" appears upon a portrait painted of her when she was in her fourteenth year. It was a barren pretension, for the estates were never returned to her, and in the very year this picture was painted Elizabeth finally gave up attempting to force James to recognize his cousin's title.

CHAPTER III

A HOUSE OF STRIFE (1582-7)

DURING the first seven years of her life one gets but fleeting glimpses of Arbella; but once settled at Hardwick and completely in the hands of her grandmother, it is possible to form a fairly clear idea of her surroundings and education. Lady Shrewsbury never allowed her household to lose sight of the respect due to Arbella's royal blood; and not only her numerous aunts and uncles, but the captive Queen of Scots herself, ostentatiously made much of the pretty child, who seems yet to have been singularly unspoiled by all this attention. Queen Mary was in waning health now, and as hope after hope flitted from her, spent much of her time in a darkened chamber, where often the little niece with her pretty childish ways and games brought the rare and only brightness unhappy Mary knew. Robert Beale, Clerk of the Privy Council and a friend of Lord Shrewsbury, sent down to interview the Queen on some business, alludes pleasantly to Arbella as "my little Lady Favour"; and one catches other such glimpses of her in letters of the period. The Shrewsbury family was one of intrinsic importance, beyond that conferred by the Earl's guardianship of the Scottish Queen; and the house was constantly visited by men of weight and distinction, to whom it is interesting to note, young though she was, Arbella was always presented as a person of consequence. Certainly Lady Shrewsbury must have seen well to her education, for only a year after her mother's death Sir Walter Mildmay, writing to Walsingham from Hardwick on the 17th June, 1583, adds this postscript—

"Sir,—After the closing up of my other letter to you, I received this little inclosed paper written with the hand

of Lady Arbella, daughter of the late Earl of Lennox. She is about seven years old and learned this Christmas last, a very proper child, and to my thinking will be like her grandmother, my old Lady Lennox. She wrote this at my request, and I meant to have showed the same to her Majesty, and withal to have presented her humble duty to her Majesty, with her daily prayer for her Majesty, for so the little lady desired me. And now, by reason of my not coming at this time to her Majesty's presence, I shall pray you to do this which I should have done."

Arbella's own little note is not extant, but it is easy to see her grandmother's instigation in the tactful message to Elizabeth, whose good graces she was to be at pains to deserve, even while still remaining the pet of Mary Stuart. This same year, 1583, died Francis Talbot, eldest son of the Earl of Shrewsbury; whose second son, Gilbert, married to Bess's daughter Mary, thus became heir to the earldom. Gilbert and Mary proved firm and faithful, if not always very discreet, friends to Arbella throughout her life; and it is from her constant correspondence with them later on that one gathers many interesting details of her life. Lady Shrewsbury's household, however, can never have been a very tranquil one. It is perhaps surprising only that her own family and that of her husband, intermarried as they were, continued upon speaking terms at all; and the oddest fact about it all is that in the inevitable family disputes some of her children sided with the Earl and some of his with her. Shrewsbury was a peace-loving man and one must therefore suppose most of the friction to have been applied from his wife's side: she was, indeed, an incorrigible intriguer, and a trial to her husband politically as well as socially. History will never, for instance, entirely elucidate her real relations with Mary, Queen of Scots, with whom she was at one time bosom friends and shortly afterwards at desperate enmity. Amongst the Domestic Series of State Papers there is an extract from a secret letter of Charles Cavendish to his mother in July 1582,

suggesting that "the Queen there" (Mary) should write a letter on his behalf with reference to some post he wished to obtain; and a reply from Mary to Lady Shrewsbury, evidently at this time not in the same house with her, professing herself "glad to hear of her and her little niece," but saying that "though in this case, full of compassion, she would do all the good she might, she fears her writing a letter about her son would be hazardous." Of Lady Shrewsbury's three sons, the eldest, Henry, married to Lady Grace Talbot, somewhat resembled his sister Elizabeth, and was gentle, slow, and easily outwitted by his younger and less scrupulous brothers William and Charles. These young gentlemen were their mother's sons to the core, and ready to aid and abet her in every clever and outrageous scheme, while Henry stood by his stepfather; and Shrewsbury's own son, Gilbert, took the part of his wife and his wife's mother.

The Shrewsbury squabbles became an absolute scandal at last, and were discussed through all England, till the Earl feared Elizabeth's wrath and his own consequent disgrace. The Queen was much too shrewd, however, to dismiss so faithful a servant, and spoke kindly of him at Court; and in one of his letters to her he sends thanks for her "gracious message by my son Gylbard among others, that I should not credit bruits, but you would be careful of me." In the same letter, written shortly before his stepdaughter's death, he thanks the Queen too for her message to "his daughter Lynox and her child"; by which one observes that from the beginning Elizabeth kept a careful eye upon the little girl whose destiny might one day lead her to succeed herself.

Arbella was so accustomed from her earliest days to domestic quarrels that they probably disturbed her very little. She was undoubtedly intelligent above the average, and took full advantage of the excellent education with which her grandmother provided her; indeed, throughout her life books were an unfailing source of comfort and delight in even her darkest days, such as they could never be to one who did not truly love learning for its own sake

She herself was a fruitful source of contention in the family, and, indeed, her future proved the rock upon which finally split the precarious friendship between her captive aunt and her indomitable grandmother. Spite of her royal blood, outside the house of Shrewsbury Arbella had few or no friends of any power, and the old Countess's first desire was to form a great alliance for her by marriage. It would be impossible of course this time to carry such a project through without the Queen's consent, but the child was young yet, and at any rate negotiations might be opened and a contract made. Vague suggestions for wedding her to her cousin the King of Scots or to Esmé Stuart, the usurper of her title, were disregarded by Bess, who meant to make the most possible of her grandchild's birthright as an Englishwoman, and secure for her the powerful influence of some great English noble. The Earl of Leicester, always her very good friend, here came forward with the suggestion of his son, little Lord Denbigh, aged, it is true, only two years to Arbella's eight, but this was no remarkable discrepancy for a royal or semi-royal pair, and Bess was well satisfied with the idea. A secret understanding, if not betrothal, was accordingly entered into on the part of the children and their portraits were exchanged.

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, could look back upon a career curiously full of vicissitudes. Born in 1532, fifth son of the Duke of Northumberland, he with his father and brothers were all imprisoned in the Tower on account of his elder brother Guildford's marriage to the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey. Some of Robert's carvings on the stone walls of his prison may be seen still in the Beauchamp Tower, and for more than a year he too lay in danger of the axe which swept away his father and brother. He was released, however, in 1555. Some years before he had married Amy Robsart; but when in 1558 Elizabeth ascended the throne and quickly singled him out for her especial favour, he soon tired of his wife, and the unhappy Amy died mysteriously in 1560. History has always credited Leicester with a hand in her death, and it certainly suited his plans miraculously well. In

1563 he was created Earl of Leicester. For eleven years he remained a widower, and then contracted himself to Douglas Sheffield (daughter of Lord Howard of Effingham and widow of John, second Baron Sheffield), whom in May 1573 he secretly and hurriedly married, two days before the birth of their son Robert. Apparently it was with great reluctance that he allowed himself to be rushed into this union, for he never owned his son as an heir, and the boy was in consequence never received at Court, and ultimately retired to Florence, where he lived and died in warm friendship with Duke Cosimo II. Soon anxious to wriggle out of the relationship, Leicester offered his unacknowledged wife £700 to ignore the ceremony and set him free; and when she refused, he is suspected of attempting to poison her. She found her hair and nails falling out, and, terrified of worse to follow, she at last agreed to his offer. He now felt himself safe, and stood indeed at the zenith of his favour. In 1575 he gave his historic entertainment to Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle; but he was already deeply in love again with the lovely Lettice Knollys, wife to Walter Devereux, first Earl of Essex. The following year Essex died suddenly at Dublin, and again it was whispered that Leicester was responsible: in any case he married Lettice as soon as possible, though she was prudent enough to insist that this ceremony should take place in the presence of all her relatives. At the same time the unfortunate Douglas Sheffield married Sir Edward Stafford of Grafton, and it seems to have been tacitly understood that these two marriages cancelled the first; but so many irregularities are to be found in almost every marriage of the period that legitimacy was continually being contested, and whether a son should be recognized or not seems to have remained very much a matter for the parents to decide, always presupposing the Queen's consent and favour. In 1580 a child was born to Leicester and Lettice, and it was this Robert Dudley, Baron of Denbigh, who was first fixed upon as a bridegroom for Arbella Stuart.

It was imperative that if the affair was to arrive at any

satisfactory conclusion it should be kept a profound secret ; but spite of her native shrewdness, Lady Shrewsbury could be violently indiscreet at times ; and in an expansive moment divulged the whole scheme to the child's aunt, Queen Mary. Then one day later she lost her temper and told Mary with unnecessary rudeness that neither she nor her son James could ever inherit England, both being foreigners, and that Arbella was the only rightful heir. Ill, faded, tired and captive, it was never safe to cross the path of Mary Stuart ; and she promptly wrote the whole story to Mauvissière, the French Ambassador, bidding him inform Elizabeth of all that was on foot, with the rather hypocritical comment that nothing had alienated her more from Lady Shrewsbury than this "vain hope which she has conceived of setting the crown of England on the head of her little girl Arbelle, and this by means of marrying her to a son of the Earl of Leicester." Mary's letter is dated the 21st March, 1583, but Elizabeth was well served in the matter of information, and had been warned of the affair before. On the 4th of the same month Lord Paget wrote to the Earl of Northumberland that "a friend in office is very desirous that the Queen should have light given her of the practice between Leycester and the Countess for Arbella, for it comes on very lustily, insomuch as the said Earl hath sent down the picture of his babie."

Leicester had to suffer some disfavour at Court on account of his share in the plan, but otherwise, since little Denbigh died almost immediately, the whole matter would be scarcely worth mentioning were it not for the torch it set to the long-smouldering resentment between Lady Shrewsbury and the Queen of Scots. Bess was furious at Mary's interference, and when her unfortunate husband endeavoured to make peace between the two angry women accused him of immoral relations with the Scotch Queen, and declaring that she would not suffer her innocent Arbelle to remain under the same roof with such wickedness, carried her off in a rage to Shrewsbury. Not contented with these wild assertions in a moment of temper, she and her sons William and Charles Cavendish deliberately

spread scandalous tales about the countryside, thus rendering themselves liable to legal penalties. Mary saw and seized her advantage. She demanded satisfaction and apology, and Bess and her sons were called before the Queen and Council to explain and justify their words. According to Mary's own account they were forced to retract all accusations upon their knees, and solemnly to declare that "the Queen of Scots since she hath been in England hath never deported herself otherwise in honour and chastity than became a Queen and a princess of her quality." Mary herself, however, was not present at this scene, and her heated imagination seems a little to have outrun the cooler facts of the case. Lady Shrewsbury simply denied having made any of the statements ascribed to her, admitted there was no foundation for them, and there the matter rested. But, as will be guessed, the episode did not conduce to more peace in the Shrewsbury household.

The understanding arranged for Arbella and the little Earl of Denbigh can scarcely be called a betrothal, but it was the first of many such talked-of possible marriages, of which the daughter of Charles Stuart and Elizabeth Cavendish was destined to be the heroine; and it is strange to notice how from her very earliest days misfortune fell upon all in any way associated with Arbella. In herself good, gentle, clever and charming, some evil spell seemed inextricably interwoven with her friendship, and all those with whom she would have entered into pleasant or loving relations invariably had cause to rue her interest. In the end she herself succumbed to the most melancholy fate of all, but not before many others had become involved in her own catastrophe. Little Denbigh was buried in the Beauchamp Chapel at Warwick, where an inscription states that "Here resteth the body of the noble imp Robert Dudley, Baron of Denbigh, a child of great hope and towardness, taken from this transitory life unto the everlasting life, and in this place laid up among his ancestors, in assured hope of the general resurrection."

The mere fact of all the talk about this betrothal drew

attention once more to the rather anomalous position in which Arbella stood ; and it was realized that her marriage must inevitably become a question of much intrigue in a few years' time. Elizabeth decided either that she must be kept unmarried altogether, since without a powerful husband to press her rights they counted for very little ; or else married to her only serious rival, her cousin James of Scotland. In 1584 Walsingham wrote to Mr. Wotton on the Queen's behalf, bidding him press the young King to choose a wife, and recommending to his notice either Arbella or a daughter of the King of Denmark : there were not, in fact, many Protestant princesses at this time in Europe from which to choose. James would have acted wisely to accept Arbella and merge her claim in his, after which, unless Elizabeth produced children of her own, nobody could have contested their joint right to the English throne : but he had a stubborn fit at the moment, did not wish to be rushed into matrimony, and refused to decide anything. Henceforth, Elizabeth used the cousins to terrorize one another, and when she wished to frighten James, made much of Arbella ; whilst, if angry with Arbella and the Shrewsburys, she spoke openly of James as her successor. It was a game she loved to play and any fresh combination brought zest to her : while this girl of the house of Stuart was useful in other ways too. Elizabeth was over fifty now, and her people began to realize that in spite of the suitors she kept dangling so cleverly, she never meant to marry after all. Friendship with France was important to her, and for ten years she had played at a ridiculous love affair with the Duc d' Alençon, the dwarfed and ugly brother of Henri III, much to the disgust of her honest English subjects. The matter went as far as the drawing up of a treaty of marriage, for the breach of which 200,000 crowns had to be paid : and the Queen welcomed Alençon on a semi-secret visit to England, and when he left, wrote that " she would give a million if her dear Frog were swimming in the Thames and not in the marshes of the Low Countries." Yet this same year there were whispers in the Council of substituting

Arbella Stuart for Elizabeth as bride to the ugly little Frenchman. They came to nothing; and Alençon died in 1585, when the Queen, writes the French Ambassador, "is in appearance full of tears and regrets, saying she is a widow who has lost her husband": while one can almost hear the sigh of relief with which she saw circumstances releasing her from an almost impossible situation.

Yet another matrimonial project was diligently though very secretly discussed for Arbella about this time, the bridegroom being one whom Elizabeth would never have countenanced for a moment. He was a son of the Duke of Parma, and was put forward by Philip of Spain: both princes, in fact, claiming through descent from John of Gaunt some remote connection with the royal line of England. Possibly Arbella herself never heard of all these projects; and in any case they can have affected her far less than the disturbing atmosphere of domestic unrest in which she dwelt. The differences between the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury are said to have originated in a trivial dispute about some tapestries, but Bess found plenty of fuel to feed her flame, and not only drove her husband to distraction herself, but set all his children at variance with him too. She was constantly flouncing away from the house where he happened to be, and settling herself down in another, generally carrying her "jewel Arbell" with her. When she married Shrewsbury she had two great houses of her own, Hardwick and Chatsworth; whilst he had eight, Wingfield, Sheffield, Tutbury, Bolsover, Rufford, Welbeck, Worksop and Handsworth; but since in the heat of his infatuation she had made him settle almost all his property upon herself and her children, the poor good "Talbot dogge" now found himself outwitted, and bitterly disappointed in his handsome shrew. Passionately he besought the Queen for permission to divorce her; but Elizabeth would have no scandals among her nobility if she could avoid it, and she used all her powers to induce peace between the wrangling pair. An armed neutrality was the best she could achieve, and Earl and Countess were never entirely reconciled Shrewsbury,

to whom the sympathy of his fellows was ever dear, appealed for help and counsel to many friends, but got never much more than such cold comfort as the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry wrote him : “ Indeed, my Lord, I have heard some say your Countess is a sharp and bitter shrew, but if shrewdness or sharpness may be a just cause of separation between a man and wife, I think few men in England would keep their wives long.”

Finally, losing heart, and weary of the constant responsibilities of his life, the kindly old Earl persuaded Elizabeth to relieve him of his onerous charge the Queen of Scots, and Sir Ralph Sadler was sent down to keep temporary guard over “ that daughter of debate.” Shrewsbury was given an appointment in Lancashire, removed alike from the troublesome vicinity of Mary and his own wife; and it is reported that he kissed Elizabeth’s hands when he heard of it, and thanked her heartily for “ delivering him from two devils.” Mary, indeed, grew too great a responsibility for any but the sternest gaoler, and as such Shrewsbury could never be described. She had become almost hopeless of ever escaping from her prison, and in a wild impatience was ready to cast aside all scruples as to the means by which she would accomplish it. Many attempts had lately been made upon Elizabeth’s life, and it was well known that these were by Mary’s consent, if not by her active instigation. Others, too, were projected, but through the difficulty of circumstances came to nothing. In July 1584 William the Silent, Prince of Orange, was foully assassinated; and immediately in alarm lest this should but prove the forerunner to another tragedy, all the nobility and gentry in England formed themselves into a Bond of Association to protect the Queen; while as soon as possible an Act of Parliament was passed forfeiting all claim to the crown by any who could be proved to have attempted the assassination of the sovereign. It was no easy matter to protect Elizabeth, who refused, she said, to be “ put in custody,” and would have no special measures taken to guard her. Her personal intrepidity was fine, but it made matters very difficult

for her Ministers : for should she die suddenly and Mary succeed her, their position would be anything but a pleasant one. But Sir Ralph Sadler, an elderly man and easily worried, clamoured to be delivered of his charge, and in April 1585 Mary was handed on to Sir Amyas Paulet, Governor of Jersey, a stern and upright man whom she could neither cajole nor corrupt. He took her to the fortress of Tutbury, and her last hope was gone.

Still she conspired, almost reckless now of discovery, and all her correspondence was intercepted, copied for Sir Francis Walsingham, and sent quietly on its way. The Babington Conspiracy was allowed to grow till Mary's share in it was proved a hundred times over, and she was then brought to trial. There could be but one end to that : she was pronounced guilty and condemned to death, but neither she nor any of her adherents believed seriously that the sentence would be put into execution. After much delay and persuasion Elizabeth signed the warrant : she could in fact do no other, for after what had passed, the menace of Mary was too great for England to keep her alive. Shrewsbury had parted with the Scots Queen on terms of comparative friendship three years before ; and when he next saw her, in February 1587, it was as one of the deputation sent down to acquaint her with the imminence of her death. She was unprepared, and the scene was a painful one ; but she calmed herself quickly and made a good end. She was only forty-five when she died, an imposing woman, over six feet high and largely built ; and her last appearance upon the scaffold, robed in vivid crimson from head to foot, must have been striking in the extreme. In her last will she disinherited her son James, leaving her rights in the English crown to Philip of Spain ; and amongst other small legacies to her ladies and other personal friends she left her illuminated " Book of Hours " to her niece Arbella Stuart. This book, now in St. Petersburg, is written in French, and evidently belonged originally to Mary in her happy days in France, for she has written in it herself, " Ce livre est à moy, Marie Reyne, 1554 " ; but it was during the weary eighteen

years of her captivity that she seems most constantly to have used it, both as a kind of autograph book for friends, and to inscribe poems in it herself. It was therefore a very personal relic, and Arbella seems to have valued it accordingly. She also in after years filled it with the signatures of her friends; and the words in her own handwriting, "Your most unfortunate Arbella Seymour," and the fact of the book having been sent to France after her marriage, make it almost certain that she made use of it as a last token to her husband. During the French Revolution the book was bought by a Russian and is now in the Musée de l'Ermitage at St. Petersburg.

CHAPTER IV

ARBELLA AT COURT (1587-90)

BESS OF HARDWICK was never so happy as when she had a dozen irons in the fire, and through all the excitements, annoyances and triumphs of her quarrel with her husband, she never lost sight of the main object of her life—the careful guardianship and education of her royal grandchild. To her own daughter Mary alone, and to Mary's husband, Gilbert Talbot, son and heir but no friend to Shrewsbury, would she trust the precious charge for rare visits to London, where once or twice in letters we hear of her, but always diligently at work with lessons and masters. The gay young uncles, Charles and William Cavendish, visited her sometimes, and wrote with great satisfaction of her progress, taking, as was but natural, the keenest interest in the welfare of one to whose favour their futures might owe much. But it was not till the summer of 1587, a few months after the death of her aunt, the unhappy Queen of Scots, that Arbella made her first appearance at Court, and it was a momentous occasion for her and all her relatives.

Perhaps Lady Shrewsbury considered the time had arrived when the child's claims should be pushed into greater prominence; perhaps the Queen herself, anxious to make James uneasy, sent for her; in any case it seems evident that Elizabeth and this possible successor to her kingdom had never met before. Bess of Hardwick did not herself present Arbella at Court, being probably too much out of favour with the Queen, who fiercely disapproved of her matrimonial squabbles; and this honour was therefore delegated to her daughter Mary and her son Charles. Arbella was well coached for her presentation, which must have appeared very formidable to her, for she

was only twelve, and Elizabeth, a singularly accomplished woman herself, was wont to catechize somewhat severely the young ladies of quality who were presented to her. The affair went off, however, with pronounced success. Charles Cavendish writes that "Her Majesty spake unto her, but not long, and examined her nothing touching her book"; but he adds with satisfaction: "It is wonderful how she profiteth in her book, and I believe she will dance with exceeding good grace, and can behave herself with great proportion to every one in their degree." Lord Burghley, the old friend of all her family, had probably smoothed the way for her at Court, and at once took her under his protection, seeing to it that she should meet the right people, for Charles goes on to explain that "She dined in the presence, but my lord-treasurer bade her to supper; and at dinner, I dining with her, and sitting over against him, he asked me whether I came with my niece or no? I said I came with her. Then he spake openly, and directed his speech to Sir Walter Rawley, greatly in her commendation, as that she had the French, the Italian, played of instruments, danced, wrought (needlework), and writ very fair; wished she were fifteen years old; and with that rounded Mr. Rawley in the ear, who answered him it would be a happy thing. At supper he made exceeding much of her; so did he the afternoon in his great chamber publicly, and of Mall, and Bess, and George, and since he hath asked when she shall come again to Court."

Lady Shrewsbury must have been hugely pleased at her grandchild's success, though no one can have been better aware than herself how fleeting the favour of Elizabeth might prove. The great Queen was at this moment practically at the zenith of her autocratic greatness, never more vigorous in mind and body, surrounded by public and private foes, standing herself in the centre of a mesh of intrigue, and yet enjoying life and her opportunities for tyranny to the full. Pope Sixtus V is said to have remarked it was a pity he could not marry Elizabeth, as their children would be able to master the world; and the same idea seems to have struck Amurath III, Sultan of Turkey,

who pointed out the suitability of such a match—the Pope being an old bachelor and the Queen an old maid. Scarcely a prince in Christendom had not at some time been put forward as a suitor for her hand, but though she never meant to accept one of them, she kept all dancing attendance, till the passage of events forced an apparently reluctant refusal from her. Being certain that she could never now bear children, she knew very well that with marriage she would lose more than half her power, and preferred to play Gloriana to her Court of gallant adventurers, guarding jealously her privilege of absorbing all their homage. The strongest men and women have their weak side, and almost anything could be obtained from Elizabeth by flattery. She would swallow it greedily, even of the grossest description, and, as strangely often happens, preferred praise for the feminine qualities she did not possess rather than for the fine courage and steady foresight which saved England many a time from invasion and disaster. But though in later years her vanity made her often ridiculous, there can be no question of the warm adoration felt for the great Queen by her own people, nor of the respect and even fear in which her own Court and the contemporary nobles and ambassadors of other lands held her.

The death of Mary Stuart brought the question of succession to the crown rather more prominently forward than before. Though several foreign princes claimed rights in it, in England the matter narrowed itself down to the two descendants of Margaret of Lennox—James of Scotland and his cousin Arbella. James, never on particularly good terms with his mother during her lifetime, had yet the grace to profess indignation at her death; and Elizabeth, who would brook no criticism of her actions, for this very reason took pains to make much of the little Stuart girl, and, knowing full well that James' spies watched her every word and action, allowed it to be very distinctly understood that she contemplated making Arbella her heir. The child was even invited to sit at the Queen's own table, an honour for which many a great prince and

noble had sighed in vain, and which showed more than any other privilege the high position in which Elizabeth intended her to be placed. It was on one of these occasions that the Queen spoke of her to Madame d'Aubespine de Châteauneuf in the words quoted in the first chapter of this book; and the French Ambassador, writing of the incident to his master, adds that Arbella had much intelligence, spoke good French, Italian and Latin, was of a pleasing appearance, and would undoubtedly be lawful heiress to the crown if James of Scotland were excluded as a foreigner. Everywhere she seems to have behaved very prettily, charmed every one with her gentleness and grace, and done great credit to her bringing-up.

Her grandmother, aunts and uncles were intensely pleased, but the capricious nature of Elizabeth's favour was well known, and all this might lead to nothing; it was at best a good beginning. If the Queen did but take a personal liking to the child, much would be attained; and there seemed every favourable indication that this was taking place. All through the summer Gilbert and Mary Talbot and Charles Cavendish kept their niece well in view at Court; and even as late as October Arbella appears to have been still in town. Her aunt had left her for a short time in the charge of certain attendant ladies at the house of Sir Henry Goodere in Newgate Street, as appears from a letter of Goodere's, dated the 10th of October, 1587, and mentioning that "My Lady Arbella (thanks be to God) is well and in health with all the rest of the ladies, and have been so ever since your ladyship saw them." The main part of this letter is taken up in explaining, as apparently Lady Talbot had requested the writer to do, exactly how much it cost him to feed and keep the young lady and her train; and while assuring her that he was most desirous she should not suppose him anxious to make any gain out of the Lady Arbella's "diet," he adds, "I have called myself a straight reckoning, and find by my attempt that my housekeeping doth stand me in five marks every week now more than I spent before the ladies came to Newgate Street, which I will leave to your own

honourable consideration." We are not told of how many Arbella's party consisted, but this does not appear an excessive charge. The letter is addressed to "The Right Honourable, my very good Lady the Lady Talbot, at the Court"; so aunt and niece were not far separated, and shortly after this the Talbots returned to the country.

Lady Shrewsbury seems to have been wisely content that her precious grandchild should remain now a good deal with this daughter and stepson, they being in high favour with the Queen; and the very first specimen we have of Arbella's handwriting is a little note written by her early in the following year to her grandmother from Fines, where she was evidently staying with the Talbots. The letter, which is dated February 8th and addressed on the back "To the Right Honourable my very good Lady and Grandmother the Countess of Shrewsbury," runs rather artlessly—

"GOOD LADY GRANDMOTHER,

"I have sent your ladyship the endes of my heare, which were cut the sixt day of the moone on Saturday last, and with them a pott of gelly which my servant made. I pray God you finde it good. My aunte Cavendisse was here on Monday last; she certified me of your ladyship's good health and dispositione, which I pray God longe to continue. I am in good health. My cousin Mary hath had three little fittes of an agew, but now she is well and merry. This with my humble duty unto your ladyship, and humble thanks for the letter you sent me laste, and craveing your dayly blessinge I humbly cease. Your ladyship's humble and obedient childe,

"ARBELLA STEWART."

Arbella's first London season having proved so successful, her aunt and uncle took her to town again the following spring, when she was once more warmly received, and treated with much distinction at Court and by all the great nobles. These were anxious days for England, however, and no great festivities were given, and not

much time spared for the entertaining of the little Stuart princess. With the death of Mary of Scotland, the Pope saw England slipping from his grasp—Elizabeth, James and Arbella being all staunch Protestants—and he therefore formally pronounced the kingdom rightfully to belong to Philip of Spain, and not only gave that most Catholic King leave, but pressed him urgently to take immediate possession of it. Philip replied by fitting out the “Invincible Armada,” a fleet consisting of 129 vessels—65 of them over 700 tons—manned by 8000 sailors and conveying 19,000 Spanish and Portuguese soldiers, over 2000 cannon, and sufficient provisions for 40,000 mouths during six months. In addition to this, 30,000 men waited in Flanders, under the Duke of Parma, to cross and reinforce the army directly the Armada had conquered the channel and landed her forces. England could beat up only a squadron of eighty ships, of which thirty alone were ships of the line; and though her seamen were far hardier and possessed immense confidence in themselves and their cause, it is not difficult to realize the overwhelming anxiety with which such an invasion was regarded throughout England, and the little stomach men had for gay parties and extravagant entertainments. The Talbots and their niece did not stay long in London, and left for the country again early in July. We do not hear if Elizabeth took any notice of her young kinswoman during this visit, but Lord Burghley continued, so far as time and opportunity would permit him, to be a good friend to her; and to her aunt and uncle’s letter of farewell to the Lord Treasurer, dated “from our pore lodging in Collman Street, this XIII July, 1588,” Arbella added a little note in French: “Je prierai Dieu, Monsr vous donner en parfaicte et entiere santé, tout heureux, et bon succès, et seray toujours preste à vous faire tout honneur et service. Arbella Stewart.”

By the end of July the Armada was sighted off the Lizard—seven miles of ships in a great half-moon, and we all know how that story ended. But though, possessing the sequel, it is easy enough now to cast the imagination

back and paint an England fearless and daring, without a qualm as to the defeat of Spain, it is unquestionable that, in spite of the undoubted superiority of the English sailors, if wind and waves had not fought for us, the mere difference in numbers alone must have had a crushing effect. As it happened, the victory was only less marvellous than the prestige it brought; the Queen became more popular than ever, and England's dominion over the seas was never afterwards seriously disputed. But if this were the year of Elizabeth's greatest glory, changes in her Court and *entourage* were gathering fast about her, and notably one well-known figure vanished now from her side. The Earl of Leicester died suddenly in the beginning of September, aged fifty-six, and the sinister rumours which followed him all his life hint that his death was caused by poison intended for his wife. In any case the beautiful Lettice almost immediately after married Sir Christopher Blount. Leicester had been in no great favour with Elizabeth during the last few years, her fancy being now taken by his stepson, the handsome young Earl of Essex; and spite of the power and influence wielded by him during a great part of his life, his had been a singularly ineffectual career. Some rough verses called "Leicester's Ghost," sung about the streets while he yet lived, make mocking allusion to his defeated hopes, and since it is evident that his designs upon little Arbella were not only public property, but were regarded as the supreme height of his ambition, it may be worth while to quote a few lines—

“ First I assayed Queene Elizabeth to wed,
 Whom divers princes courted, but in vaine ;
 When in the course unluckily I sped,
 I sought the Scots' Queene's mariage to obtaine ;
 But when I reapt no profit for my paine,
 I sought to match Denbigh, my tender childe,
 To Dame Arbella, but I was beguiled.

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 If Death awhile yong Denbigh's life had spared,
 The grandame, uncle, and the father-in-law,
 Might thus have brought all England under awe.”

There is no reason to suppose Arbella any less exultant

than the rest of England at the great victory of 1588; but the only mention we get of her this autumn is concerned with her private life. After all the painfully correct behaviour reported of her, it is refreshing to find a glimpse of self-will and naughtiness in a letter from one Nicholas Kynnersley, apparently a tutor of hers, to her grandmother, in November of this year. Arbella was at Wingfield, in Derbyshire, and Kynnersley writes that "My lady Arbella, at eight of the clock this night, was merry, and eats her meat well, but she went not to the school these six days, therefore I would be glad of your ladyship's coming, if there were no other reason." Through the thick walls of the Shrewsbury castles the child's flesh and blood begins to assert itself at last, and we see something of the real self soon to emerge. Usually docile and sweet-tempered, Arbella was wilful on occasions throughout her life, and almost invariably at the particular moment when she would have been wiser to repress her emotions. The visits to London had developed her a good deal, and there is no doubt that her Aunt Mary was a more lenient guardian than her grandmother. It had been borne in upon her too that that grandmother's iron will counted for far less in the great world than in her own small domain, and henceforth the grim old Countess's power over Arbella was never quite so absolute as before. But Bess of Hardwick did her duty staunchly, so far as she saw it, by this grandchild for whom she had sacrificed so much; and it must have been this very year that Sir John Harington spoke of Arbella "at Wingfield when being thirteen years old, she did read French out of Italian and English out of both, much better than I could, or than I expected." He praises, too, and says all others praised, "her virtuous disposition, her choice education, her rare skill in languages, her good judgment and sight of music, and a mind to all these free from pride, vanity and affectation, and the greatest sobriety in her fashion of apparel and behaviour as may be, of all of which I have been myself an eyewitness, having seen her several times at Hardwick, and at Chelsea, where she made me read the tale of Drusilla in Orlando

unto her, and censured it with a gravity beyond her years." Her careful education, it may be seen, was already bearing fruit.

It is not certain whether Arbella visited London the next year, 1589, but she was not forgotten by the Queen, for Gilbert Talbot writes to his stepmother in July: "The Queen asked me very carefully the last day I saw her for my Lady Arbella. . . . Our prayer is to God to prosper my Lady Arbella, and to bless our little ones, and to reward your ladyship for your great care and goodness to them"; and again later, "God bless her with all His blessings." Gilbert and his wife were sincerely fond of Arbella, but no doubt they also saw in her advancement their own, and anxiously used all their power to promote it. Lady Shrewsbury was pleased at Elizabeth's notice, but she felt it also full time that something more tangible should be done for her grandchild. In the autumn of this year Arbella would complete her fourteenth year, which seems in her case to have been regarded as a coming of age. The question of her rather mythical estates was again revived, and early in February Burghley and Walsingham entered into correspondence with Thomas Fowler regarding the effects of her paternal grandmother, Margaret of Lennox. The Manor of Smallwood, in Cheshire, was all Arbella ever obtained of these, and this was let on her behalf to a tenant named Egerton, and does not seem to have brought her in any very large revenue. Elizabeth, who till now had posed as demanding her rightful property in Scotland for her young kinswoman, finally gave up the claim in April of this year; and though Lady Shrewsbury declared herself still unsatisfied, this was regarded more in the nature of a protest than as any serious intention still to contest the matter. Her only further action concerning it was to have Arbella painted full length in white satin and pearls, and at the foot of the picture to have inscribed: "Arbella Stuarda, Comtissa Leoninice. *Ætatis* 13 et $\frac{1}{2}$. Anno Dni., 1589."

Margaret of Lennox had died so poor that her grandchild could not hope to inherit much from her, but to her

jewels Arbella had an undoubted claim. Fowler, it will be remembered, was to keep these for her till she was fourteen; but Fowler had already once been robbed of them, and had then made them over to the keeping of King James, from whom it would not be easy to obtain them. Lord Burghley interested himself in the matter, and the question dragged on for over a year, in the midst of which Fowler himself died. He having been primarily responsible for their safe keeping, and the debt devolving upon his son William, William tried his hardest to make James disgorge the spoil, but with no success. Sir Robert Bowes, writing to Burghley early in June 1590, remarks: "Sundrie times I have moved the King that the Jewels appertaining to the Lady Arbella might be restored to her. Nevertheless I am still deferred that upon sight of the Lady Margaret's will the King will take order in all these things." It is not probable that Arbella ever received any of the ornaments. It is true that she was in after-life possessed of much very valuable jewellery, and in particular of a magnificent rope of pearls which she wears in many of her portraits, and which may possibly have been the "fair pearl chain" mentioned in Lady Lennox's inventory; but it is at least as likely that her royal aunt, Queen Mary, who is known to have had many rare pearls, may have given it to her.

Lady Shrewsbury remained at bitter variance with her husband until the old Earl died in November of this year. The declining years of good George Talbot had not been happy ones, and he was little sorry to leave a world where all his sterling qualities, kind heart, and staunch honesty had brought him nothing but deceit and ingratitude from those he had most loved and benefited. Passing over his eldest son Gilbert, who succeeded him in the title, but who had taken part against him in the family disputes, Lord Shrewsbury made his two younger sons his executors. These two declined to act, and Bess seized the office, to find herself this time at variance with Gilbert, who, now head of his house, would endure her arrogance no longer. Each member of the family took a part against the others.

Edward Talbot was accused of attempting to murder his brother with a pair of poisoned gloves, and the battle over money and lands raged furiously for months. So far as Arbella was able to share in it, her sympathies were chiefly with the new Earl and Countess, perhaps naturally. They had been very kind to her, and association with them had led to indulgence and gaiety, whilst her grandmother's authority was always despotic and often harsh. Nevertheless, according to her lights, Bess had been a good friend to the girl, and fought stoutly on her behalf, besides doing her best to gain the royal favour for her. In a will made shortly after this time, Lady Shrewsbury entreated her Majesty that she "would accept the poor widow's mite of a cup worth £200, and that she would fulfil all her Majesty had most graciously oft-times said she would and be good to the orphan Arbella; that she would receive Arbella to wait on herself as the greatest comfort to that poor desolate orphan now left only to depend on her gracious providence, whose most faithful loyalty and careful willing service unto her Majesty in all true allegiance I dare and do answer for as for myself." Continuing, the old Countess left "To my very loving grandchild Arbella Stuart my christal Glass framed with silver and gilt and set with Lapis Lazarus and Agget; and one Sable the Head being of Gold set with Stone, and a white Ermin Sable the Head being of Gold Enamelled and all my Pearls and Jewels which I shall have at my decease except such as shall be otherwise bequeathed, and I give to her a thousand pounds in money."

But Lady Shrewsbury lived for many years after this, and when at last she died, she had quarrelled so bitterly with Arbella that her final will was couched in very different terms.

CHAPTER V

PLOTS (1590-95)

ARBELLA was now fifteen, and it might be supposed that after so fortunate an entry into Court life she had henceforth but to enjoy all the luxury and prestige her position could afford her. But a hundred tiny indications show that she was suddenly in no such great favour with the Queen as formerly. It was a nice matter for her aunt and uncle, accomplished courtiers as they were, to treat her with respect sufficient for her royal blood and yet not seem to take too much for granted her presumptive heirship to the crown. A hairbreadth too much either way would offend Elizabeth, and it seems that on her last visit a thought too much insistence had been laid upon her royal birth. Old Lord Shrewsbury had seen this, though his family thought him blind and stupid, and he spoke of it to a favourite servant of his, who later wrote down what he could remember of the conversation—

“What speeches the Earl of Shrewsbury, my lord and master, used to me at my being with him the 24th of September, being Thursday, 1590, at his house at Hanworth, in his chamber (account of talk that he had about my lady his wife), with almost tears in his eyes, that he feared the Lady Arrabell would bring much trouble in his house by his wife and her daughter’s devises, and therewithall he clapt his hand sundry times upon his breast, saying, ‘Here it lies; here it lies. Do you not know one Dr. Browne,’ said he, ‘a cunning fellow? He is a great man with my daughter Talbot and the Cavendishes?’ I answered, ‘I know him not.’ ‘Well,’ said he, ‘that same Browne is a masker in this house, and my wife and her daughter have great affairs with him, and are dealing with some

of the heralds about matters which must be kept from me (for at this time I am a great block in their way). I know Gilbert Talbot will be too much ruled by those—for they do with him what they list, and so I have told his friends, but all will not help. If God give me any ability and health, I will go to the Queene this next spring, though I go but two miles a day. And I know that the Queene affecteth not Gilbert Talbot, both for those matters he took part in with my wife against me, and for this Lady Arrabell. She was wont to have the upper hand [*i.e.* to be treated as a superior] of my wife and her daughter Talbot, but now it is otherwise, as it is told me, for that they have been advised by some of their friends at the Court that it was misliked. My daughter Talbot persuaded her husband how he is bound by all laws, both divine and others, that he ought not to keep any secrets from her being his wife, whatsoever it be that he knoweth or thinketh.’”

Arbella seems to have divided her time between an exciting but anxious life at Court with the young Shrewsburys, and sundry visits of long dreary months in the country, under the dragon eye of her grandmother. Bess herself went no more to town. But the chief crime and danger of the girl in the eyes both of Elizabeth and James was that she was of marriageable age, and that all the Roman Catholics in Europe were seeking to convert or kidnap her—their object being to marry her to one of those numerous Catholic princes who held some remote claim to the English throne, which a union with Arbella would very materially strengthen. Chief among these were the two sons of Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, who derived their claim through a daughter of John of Gaunt. The elder son, Rainutio, was already married, and the younger a Cardinal; but the Pope, quite sensible that after the episode of the Spanish Armada Philip of Spain would never be acceptable even to the English Catholics, and realizing the advantages to himself of the Parma marriage, professed himself quite prepared to absolve the young Cardinal of his vows if the matter could thus be arranged.

It had already been hinted at some four years earlier, but now it was openly discussed, and though there is no evidence that Arbella gave it the least encouragement, or was indeed ever officially approached concerning it, the bare contemplation of such a marriage made Elizabeth furiously angry. From this time for many years Arbella became, quite innocently, the centre of so elaborate an intricacy of plot and counterplot that no succeeding generations, working patiently through masses of State and Private Papers in every variety of code and cipher, have been able entirely to unravel it. The girl herself, not strikingly lovely, but pleasant looking, seems to have owed such personal charm as she possessed more to her expression than to the regularity of her features. Her eyes, usually painted as blue, are sometimes described as hazel; her hair was fair, her figure good, her hands white and beautiful, and the brightness and intelligence of her smile particularly attractive. But it was seldom or never for herself that poor Arbella was desired—merely as a pawn in the great and endless game of king- and queen-making.

In the year of Lord Shrewsbury's death, 1590, hints are to be found in various State and Private Papers of a projected marriage between Arbella and young Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland, rumour in one case going so far as to assert that they had been privately wedded; but there was absolutely no truth in this, and Elizabeth would never have permitted such a match. It was, however, taken for granted at this time that Arbella would marry shortly, and conjecture was universal as to the bridegroom chosen for her. But Elizabeth seems in this case to have played the part of dog in the manger. She herself had never married, she was growing old now, and therefore nobody else should marry. The girl was a useful weapon, too, against James, should he presume upon his position. Probably by now the Queen had realized that James was of necessity her natural successor, but she would not have him reckon upon it, and kept all in the greatest uncertainty. If he had married his cousin three

years earlier there could have been no further question about the matter, but he had let that chance slip, and allied himself instead with the Princess Anne of Denmark. Therefore uneasy fears possessed him now lest Arbella, a young and pretty girl, whose head might easily be turned by flattery and persuasion, should yield to the determined campaign of the Jesuits, return to the old faith, and lead a Catholic party in or against England. Powerful support from abroad would be hers should she follow this course, and his own claim would stand in the greatest jeopardy. He therefore again determined to bind her interests to his own, and, since he could no longer marry her himself, once more suggested his favourite, Esmé Stuart, Duke of Lennox, the usurper of her title, who, he assured Burghley, "longeth after Arbella." He promised, should she wed Lennox, to make him his heir, a promise he had no possible power to fulfil; and when Elizabeth, "with harsh words and much contempt," refused to listen to the suggestion, he proposed another favourite, the Earl of Arran, only to be as ruthlessly refused as before. Snubbed and disheartened, he fell back upon correspondence with his cousin herself, to whom his first letter is dated from Holyrood House, the 23rd of December, 1591, and signed, "Your loving and affectionate cousin, James R." In it he apologizes for "having so long kept silence till the fame and report of so good parts in you have interpellèd me"; and continues, rather patronizingly, to remark that his heart rejoices, "so can I not forbear to signify to you hereby, what contentment I have received hearing of your so virtuous behaviour, wherein I pray you most heartily to continue . . . that you may be the more encouraged to proceed in your virtuous demeanour, reaping the fruit of so honest estimation, the increase of your honour and joy, and your kindly affected friends, specially of me, whom it pleaseth most to see so virtuous and honourable scions arise of that race whereof we have both our descent. Now," he adds, and this is the real object of the letter, "hearing more certain notice of the place of your abode, I will the more frequently visit you

by my letters, which I would be glad to do in person, expecting also to know from time to time of your estate by your own hand, which I look you will not weary to do, being first summoned by me, knowing how far I shall be pleased thereby. In the meanwhile, and next occasion of further knowledge of your estate, after my heartiest commendation, I wish you, my dear cousin, of God all honour and hearty contentment."

It is probable that Arbella acceded to her cousin's request to correspond with him, although no other of his letters are extant, nor any at all of hers; but it would have been quite in keeping with her character and temperament to do so. There was a singular simplicity about this girl, and she was ever ready to turn eagerly to any proffered affection; nor were her relatives so many that she could afford to deny their claims. Never a politician even in the fevered atmosphere of Court, all bids for her ambition left her cold. She had no wish to be a Queen. Those about her could not understand this attitude, and imagined it a pose to hide some deep-laid scheme, but in truth it is doubtful if Arbella ever heard one quarter of the plots in which her name played the most prominent part. Those which did come to her ears she disregarded. She longed rather wistfully for disinterested love and a kind home, and if any had been cunning enough to bait their snare with these, she might very easily have walked into their trap. But it was all ambition, power, wealth, they offered her, and for these she cared not a snap of the fingers. It is rather curious, looking back upon this period, to notice how steadfastly she remained a Protestant. Excepting for those of a strongly religious turn of mind (and we have no evidence that Arbella was one of them), the question of submitting to the old or the reformed religion was largely a matter of expediency; many of the great nobles of Elizabeth's Court still remained Roman Catholics; Henri of Navarré bought his kingdom of France by a Mass; and even Elizabeth, James, and Mary of Scotland, each regarded by posterity as the staunch upholder of

their particular faith, have been proved by later-discovered letters to have dallied with the advantages of adopting its reverse. In Arbella's case there is no question of the importance it would have given her in Europe had she chosen to submit herself to the Pope, nor was there anything in her upbringing to make it particularly distasteful to her. Her father, it is true, had by Elizabeth's wish been educated as a Protestant from his sixteenth year, but he had died in her infancy; her grandmother, Margaret of Lennox, had been a bigoted Catholic; her other grandmother, Lady Shrewsbury, held no particular prejudices; whilst her favourite aunt, the new Lady Shrewsbury, with whom she now spent most of her time, was an ardent adherent of the Pope. In Mary Talbot the foreign conspirators indeed placed great hopes for moulding the plastic mind of the young girl; but though this lady no doubt did her best (and at one time great disturbance was caused by rumours that she had had Mass said in Arbella's apartment), her influence in this particular seems never to have carried any weight with her niece.

The immense activity of plot and treason centring about this innocent and unconscious girl for the next thirteen years of her life is almost incredible. The Pope's emissaries quickly found that she herself was not easily to be got at, nor, this once accomplished, could she be moved by any appeals to her ambition. Nevertheless it was necessary to their schemes to obtain possession of her person, as a mere rallying-point if for no other purpose; and while she herself in the first flush of youth was enjoying, so far as the frowns and suspicions of the old Queen would permit, the attention paid her, merely for the surface-pleasure of its novelty and excitement, with no thought of the sinister depths such a little way below; quite endless were the devices resorted to for attempting to kidnap her and carry her abroad. In the State and Secret Papers of the day, hardly a week passes without mention of some fresh plot concerning the Lady Arbella. As early as May 1589, Thomas Barnes, a Catholic spy, reported that his friends "can trust none in England, as all platforms

fell to the ground on the death of the Queen of Scots. Their next design will be built on other ground than religion, and they harp much on Lady Arbella, despairing of the King of Scots, whom Father Holt calls the cunningest young man ever bred." Instructions given to Barnes by his Jesuit employers at this time were "To learn why the King of Scots was not established heir-apparent to the crown according to promise, and how he takes the non-performance of this. What conceit the Queen and Council have of his marriage with Denmark; who of the Court favour him, and on whom he relies for settling the crown." Also "what party Arbella and her favourers adhere to, and how they mean to bestow her in marriage, seeing Leicester's intent to match his bastard with her is by his death made frustrate." Barnes's answers to these questions were to the effect that he could find no promise given to James to declare him heir, that the Queen did not like the Denmark marriage, but that there was no faction in England formally against James, "only impediments from the hardy old Queen"; but James was canny, stuck to his religion, and Walsingham and Hunsdon were for him. "He needs not Arbella's marriage to further his title, though he has been scared with her to keep him in order. It has been required that she should not be married without his consent. . . . It is thought the Lady Arbella's friends are unlikely to take part in any new opinion not countenanced by the State." In January 1590 came comment: "No speech of the Lady Arbella's marriage"; and after this the scheme for uniting her with Parma seems to have been diligently pushed in every possible quarter.

In August 1591, Sir Robert Cecil, son of old Lord Burghley, learned from a correspondent that a certain spy was "busy in getting a picture of Arbella to carry to the Duke of Parma, and has Mr. U.'s letter to aid him therein to Hildyard. He was very desirous to get an agent here for those on the other side"; and Cecil shall be informed when he finds one. Hildyard was a well-known miniature painter of the day, and did, in fact, paint two pictures of Arbella about this period, one of which

may quite possibly have been used for the purpose named. Both are much alike, and represent her in a white-and-gold dress, wearing a big ruff, and a coronet on her hair, which is somewhat stiffly dressed in Elizabeth's own style. A year later, in April 1592, Cecil learned from another spy that "Michael Moody, Sir Edward Stafford's servant, is employed from beyond sea to practise with Arbella about a marriage between her and the Duke of Parma's son; that he was sent once before for her picture, and has been thrice in England this year." And about the same time Barnes wrote to a friend, Charles Paget, that he had had to absent himself, as he was wanted for plots as a practiser in the marriage between Arbella and the Duke of Parma's son, which had been given out also as Paget's errand to England, and that he marvelled not to have heard of this from him. "It is true Morley the singing man employs himself in that kind of service, and has brought divers into danger."

Nevertheless, and in spite of the scorn with which Morley is here mentioned, he came nearer to accomplishing his purpose than any of the other plotters, since he actually gained the confidence of old Lady Shrewsbury, and became reader in her house for three-and-a-half years. Under these circumstances he must have been constantly in Arbella's company and upon fairly confidential terms, and it is surprising only that he should not much earlier in that period have endeavoured to press the matter with which he was charged. But all these conspirators, so reckless on the Continent, seem to have been over-cautious, not to say faint-hearted, when any real risk arose; and Morley quickly saw that Arbella was little likely to listen to his persuasions. A plot of this description, if it failed, came perilously near to be counted as treason, and the punishment for treason was peculiarly horrible. In the hope of events playing into his hands, therefore, Morley said nothing and lingered on; or perhaps in this comfortable life which had fallen to him, he thought less of his former purpose; but through all that time shrewd Bess had no suspicion of him, till quite suddenly they quarrelled

over his salary, and she dismissed him. Almost immediately after, Burghley wrote to warn her of spies lurking near her grandchild in the most innocent dress, and begged her to be most careful in guarding the precious Arbella. Her reply, agitated at such close danger and anxious to exonerate herself from all accusations of carelessness, gives so clear a picture of the almost prison strictness in which poor Arbella lived at Hardwick that it must be quoted entire—

“ MY HONOURABLE GOOD LORD,

“ I received your Lordship’s letter on Wednesday towards night, being the 20th of this September, by a servant of Mr. John Talbot’s, of Ireland. My good Lord, I was at the first much troubled to think that so wicked and mischievous practises should be devised to entrap my poor Arbella and me, but I put my trust in the Almighty, and will use such diligent care as I doubt not to prevent whatsoever shall be attempted by any wicked persons against the poor child. I am most bound to her Majesty that it pleased her to appoint your Lordship to give me knowledge of this wicked practice, and I humbly thank your Lordship for advertising it; if any such like be hereafter discovered, I beseech your Lordship I may be forewarned. I will not have any unknown or suspected person to come to my house. Upon the least suspicion that may happen here, anyway, I shall give advertisement to your Lordship. I have little resort to me; my house is furnished with sufficient company. Arbella walks not late; at such time as she shall take the air, it shall be near the house and well attended on; she goeth not to anybody’s house at all; I see her almost every hour in the day; she lieth in my bedchamber. If I can be more precise than I have been, I will be. I am bound in nature to be careful for Arbella; I find her loving and dutiful to me, nor more by me regarded than to accomplish her Majesty’s pleasure, and that which I think will be for her service. I would rather wish many deaths than to see this, or any such like wicked attempt, to prevail.

“ About a year since, there was one Harrison, a seminary, that lay at his brother’s house about a mile from Hardwick, whom I thought then to have caused to be apprehended, and to have sent him up, but found he had license for a time. Notwithstanding, the seminary soon after went from his brother’s, finding how much discontent I was with his lying so near me. Since my coming now into the country, I had some intelligence that the same seminary was come again to his brother’s house, my son William Cavendish went thither of a sudden to make search for him, but could not find him. I write thus much to your Lordship, that if any such traitorous and naughty persons (through her Majesty’s clemency) be suffered to go abroad, that they may not harbour near my houses, Wingfield, Hardwick, nor Chatsworth in Derbyshire; they are the likeliest instruments to put a bad matter in execution.

“ One Morley, who hath attended on Arbell and read to her for the space of three years and a half, showed to be much discontented since my return into the country, in saying he had lived in hope to have some annuity granted him by Arbell out of her land during his life, or some lease of ground to the value of forty pound a year, alleging that he was so much damnified by leaving of the University, and now saw that if she were willing, yet not of ability, to make him any such assurance. I, understanding by divers that Morley was so much discontented, and withal of late having some cause to be doubtful of his forwardness in religion (though I cannot charge him with Papistry), took occasion to part with him. After he was gone from my house, and all his stuff carried from him, the next day he returned again, very importunate to serve without standing upon any recompense, which made me more suspicious, and the more willing to part with him. I have another in my house, who will supply Morley’s place very well for the time. I will have those that will be sufficient in learning, honest and well-disposed, so near as I can. I am enforced to use the hand of my son, William Cavendish, not being able to write so much myself, for fear of bringing yet great pain to my head. He only is privy to your Lord-

ship's letter, and neither Arbelle, nor any other living, nor shall be.

“ I beseech your Lordship, I may be directed from you as occasion shall fall out. To the uttermost of my understanding, I have been and will be careful. I beseech the Almighty to send your Lordship a long and happy life, and so I will commit your Lordship to His protection. From my house at Hardwick the 21st of September, 1592. Your Lordship's as I am bound,

“ E. SHREWSBURY.”

It is easy to see how glad Arbella must have been to exchange this close keeping for the comparative liberty and excitement of London and Court life. She cannot, it is true, have failed to know of the Queen's dislike, for Elizabeth made that plain enough, casting the shadow of her displeasure equally upon the girl's aunt and uncle. Lady Shrewsbury's religion in especial made her an object of suspicion, yet, though many things were rumoured of her, nothing was proved, and Earl Gilbert himself declared his own soul to be “ as clear as crystal ” in the matter. Both lived as cautiously as circumstances and their own hot tempers would allow, but this did not prevent frequent brushes between all the Cavendishes and their sworn foes the Stanhopes—a feud of years, in which Arbella herself often used such influence as she had to make peace. That this interference was not always to her own interest is shown in a letter from London, dated 1593, where it is remarked that “ The Queen here daily bears more and more a bad conceit of the Earl of Shrewsbury and his Countess for the sake of the Lady Arbella, which has been evidenced in a late quarrel between his Lordship and the Stanhopes.” The quarrel began between the ladies of the respective families, and was taken up by their lords. The Cavendishes cut the stirrup leathers of the Stanhopes, and were never afterwards forgiven; as late as 1599 Charles Cavendish was set upon in the street by Sir John Stanhope's servants and severely wounded, but not before he had killed two men himself. After this an order came

from the Privy Council that "the like must not happen again."

Regarding the matter dispassionately, one cannot altogether blame Elizabeth's attitude to Arbella. The girl was, as we know, not only innocent of all complicity in the plots woven about her name, but also supremely uninterested in them; yet this seemed more than improbable to her contemporaries. Nobody would have been in the least surprised had she suddenly changed her religion, escaped to Spain or France, married a Catholic prince, and laid her undoubted claim to inherit the throne in the hands of those who were only too eager to press it. She appeared simple and innocent enough, but still waters run deep, and this might be merely a mask to hide Jesuitical cunning. Elizabeth watched her closely, and she would have been a fool if she had not. It is true that to keep a pretty girl in her teens constantly about herself, and that self, as she very well knew, growing every day more faded, sallow, lined and old, could not have made the Queen feel any more tenderly towards Arbella; but the least vain of women would probably have chafed at such a situation. There was no lack of vanity in Elizabeth, and on the whole she treated her young rival with greater consideration than at that period most sovereigns would have bestowed upon her. Many women, and men too, would have surrendered to their fears, and sent the girl to the Tower for life, or at least to a strict captivity in some remote country house; that Elizabeth invited Arbella constantly to Court, though possibly partially to annoy James, must be counted to her for courage and for grace.

Meanwhile plots continued to be formed, but their objective to a certain extent changed. In 1592 the Duke of Parma died, his son Rainutio was not so keenly set upon the marriage, and soon after this the Jesuits seem to have despaired of converting Arbella, and set themselves, on the contrary, to belittle her rights. Even James appeared an easier prey for their persuasions; or, failing him, there was always Philip of Spain upon whom to call. A prisoner examined in the Tower confessed to Cecil that



QUEEN ELIZABETH
By Marcus Gheeraedts

Photo, Emery Walker

“ It is intended to prove bastardy against Arbella. . . . The King of Spain said he would invade royally or not at all, even though it cost him a year’s revenues of his Indies. James of Scotland must be made a Catholic, and then would the Pope help him.” Attorney-General Coke wrote notes afterwards upon this and the “ disabling of Arbella.” The bar sinister intended to be proved against her was, in fact, somewhat remote, and concerned the birth of her grandmother, Margaret of Lennox. The old scandalous tales about Queen Margaret of Scotland’s marriage with the Earl of Angus, the fact of his wife being alive at the time, and the tradition of her intermediate marriage with the Lord of Annandale, were all raked up and discussed again. And in 1594 a great stir was caused by the publication of a book upon the Succession, ostensibly written by one Richard Dolman, but really, as all well knew, by a particularly brilliant English Jesuit—Father Parsons.

In this book Parsons writes not only of James, Arbella, Philip and the House of Parma, but also of all members of the English nobility in whose veins any drop of royal blood yet ran. Since for generations past the royal family had constantly intermarried with the great nobles, these were still many; but in one case only was the union recent enough to count as a real relationship, this being the Earl of Hertford. Of him and of his descendants more will be said later. “ For and against the Lady Arbella,” Parsons remarks merely; “ For Arbella, is alleged her being a young Ladie and thereby fit to procure affections: and that by her marriage she may joyne some other title with her own and thereby make friends. Against her, her being nothing at all Allied with the Nobilitie of England; her Title as doubtful as the rest, if not more. Her Religion can be no great motive either for or against her: for by all likelihood it is as tender yet, as green and flexible, as is her age and sex. . . . She is a woman, and it were perhaps a great inconvenience that three of the weak sex should succeed one another. Also all her Kindred by her Father is meer Scottish. In England she hath none but by her Mother the Candishes; a mean Familie and Kindred for a

Princess." A more disparaging notice could scarcely be imagined, and the whole trend of the book was to prove the paramount claims of Philip; yet the mere mention of Arbella's name as a possible heiress woke the old resentment in Elizabeth.

But meanwhile, whether Arbella was or was not to become the puppet queen of the Catholics, it became more than ever imperative that they should have her in their hands, since else she might be used against them. Plots to capture and carry her abroad grew more numerous than ever, and the ringleader in almost all of these was Sir William Stanley, a renegade Englishman who had once fought gallantly for his country in Ireland, where he had been severely wounded; but on finding that the lands with which he had hoped to be rewarded were bestowed instead upon Sir Walter Raleigh (the favourite of the hour), whilst he himself was sent unrecognized to Flanders, he had thrown off his allegiance to Elizabeth, and had become the most reckless and daring secret agent of Philip of Spain. Rumour declared that Philip allowed him three hundred crowns a month, and probably considered his services well worth the sum. A Jesuit priest named John Yong, *alias* George Dingley, on being examined in the Tower in August 1592, made full confession before the Lord Keeper Puckering, Lord Buckhurst, and Mr. Fortescue, Chancellor of the Exchequer, of all he knew of Stanley's designs. There were great preparations, he said, in all parts of Spain against England. Thirty ships were ready now, and twelve great ships of Biscay, named after the Twelve Apostles, still in preparation. Sir William Stanley was the overseer and director for cutting portholes, and Yong once heard him say "he must begone to do service with a Lady." The narrative continues: "When Roulston departed back again, he came to Stanley, who said, 'Thou art welcome, I hope. Thou shalt be employed in as good service for the Lady of which we have often talked.' At which time he said no more. Yet, being demanded after by one Dr. Stillington what the Lady was, 'Oh!' saith he, 'if we had her, the most of our fears were past, for any one that could

hinder us in England. It is *Arbella*,’ saith he, ‘ who keepeth with the Earl of Shrewsbury, whom most certainly they will proclaim Queen if their mistress should now happen to die. And the rather they will do it, for that in a woman’s government they may still rule after their own designments. But here is Symple,’ saith he, ‘ and Roulston, who, like cunning fellows, have promised to convey her by stealth out of England into Flanders, which if it be done, I promise unto you she shall shortly after visit Spain, and as I judge, they will prove men of their word.’ ”

This conversation, Yong reported, took place at Valladolid, and shortly after, Symple and Roulston were sent to Flanders and never heard of again. A careful copy of the Confession was made and sent to Lord Burghley, who showed it to the Queen. Since it was a very long document and he was an old man, she bade him let his son, Sir Robert Cecil, read it aloud to her, but at its close she looked very grave, and bade neither father nor son speak of it to any one, nor tell any other member of the Council about it. Another priest, Thomas Christopher, also confessed to Burghley about this time, first, that he only saw Sir William Stanley twice—on going and returning to Rome, when he used the speeches reported about Lady Arbella; but on being pressed further, that “ Sir William Stanley, on his last coming from Rome, being entertained with great courtesy by My Lord the Bishop of Montefiascou at supper, discoursed largely of the state of England. Among other things, saying ‘ that one young Lady, as yet unmarried, was the greatest fear they had, lest she should be proclaimed Queen if it should so happen that her Majesty should die.’ Yet there was hope that some will be found to hinder the matter. So he would not name the Lady, his man being there in presence. Yet, at my coming to Paris, and talking with one Mr. Robert Tempest, I repeated again these words, demanding if he did know anything concerning this young Lady. He answered that very shortly he trusted to God to meet with her here at Brussels. For that one Symple, a Scot, and one Roulston had undertaken to convey her out of England. The Lady doth abide with an Earl whose

name I do not remember. And she is allied to the Queen of Scots."

In July 1594, in a letter from one Thomas North, at Munich, to the Earl of Essex, mention is made of some words the Spanish Legate had used concerning the "beauteous and virtuous" Lady Arbella. "They seem to study how some plot may be laid for her being conveyed out of England," he concludes. Another letter of about a year later, from a captive in the Tower to Sir Edward Coke, was evidently sent in the hope of gaining liberty by divulging all the writer knew or had gathered of continental feeling on the subject. A perfect web of deceit, self-interest and double-dealing is unveiled in it. The Duke of Brignola and the Prince of Parma, who held claims through Edward Crookback, were ready to offer Elizabeth their alliance against Spain, whom they were supposed to support, if she would let one of them marry Arbella and merge her claim in his; but, this once accomplished, they would of course be no enemies to Philip, but allow him to enjoy Portugal and the Low Countries in peace. Another plan was that Philip should marry his own son to Arbella; yet another that her father should be proved a bastard, and she eliminated from the succession altogether. The fears of James of Scotland were also touched upon, and it was remarked that Arbella's relatives, the Shrewsburys, were acting very poorly for her interests in quarrelling with the Queen's favourite ministers, who would, in consequence, certainly not support her claims, since if she came to the throne they would lose their office. Another letter, intercepted a little later, from the Catholics in Lyons, begs to know "when the fleet will be ready, as they prayed for the day when good Philip of Spain might be placed in England and married to the gentlewoman there, that they might go and end their lives in that country."

For all the ingenuity displayed in these schemes, none of them would appear to have been very practical, for in spite of all the talk, no serious attempt was ever made to carry Arbella off. Probably Elizabeth knew a great deal more about them than the girl herself; but she could not be



ARBELLA STUART
Aged about Seventeen

sure of that, and the gulf of distrust widened between them. An absurd intercepted letter from a Captain North at this time says that he "had commission from Arbella to treat with foreign princes," that she wished to go to Spain, and "her common speech was that she thought no match in England good enough for her." Every agent for this task tried to make his principals believe that he had the Lady's ear; but Elizabeth was too shrewd to believe all that came to her knowledge. Nevertheless, it all makes a strange, dark background to Arbella's Court life, and it seems wonderful how much pleasure she managed to distil from existence, quite heedless of the web of treason woven about her name. Her joys were by no means always frivolous ones; she had always loved literature, and in the latter end of the golden age of Queen Bess she might have her fill of that. Shakespeare himself acted at Court in 1594; his plays were constantly given, together with those of many others of the great Elizabethans; Spenser was in London in 1595 and 1596, and the *Faerie Queen* just given to the world; Sidney's *Arcadia* and *Astrophel*, Montaigne's *Essays*, Lyly's *Euphues*, Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberato*, were all recent works; while in 1596 Raleigh wrote the *Discovery of Guiana*, and a year later Bacon published the first edition of his *Essays*. Here was much mental food for the studious mind of the eager girl, and Arbella enjoyed it all to the full; it was not only masques and banquets that made London a desirable city to her, and she delighted, too, in the company of famous men and brilliant women. The opening-up of a whole new continent too, beyond the western ocean, must have held immense potentialities for her; these were the days of lavish speech and large accomplishment: when the Queen bestowed upon Philip Sidney a grant of thirty million acres, "in certain parts of America not yet discovered," and gave a royal patent to Sir Humphrey Gilbert to "discover and occupy remote heathen lands not actually possessed by any Christian prince or people." Always books and knowledge appealed to Arbella, and she even wrote a little poetry herself, as indeed most well-educated people did at this time. Ten

years later she was known as “the most noble and learned Lady Arbella,” and the title seems to have pleased her; whilst in Evelyn’s *Numismata* her name occurs in the “List of Learned Women”; and Phillips, the son-in-law of Milton, mentions her among “Modern Poetesses” in his *Theatrum Poetarum*. Already we see her growing just a little emancipated from the Shrewsburys and their set.

CHAPTER VI

MORE PLOTS (1596-1601)

IN 1596 a strong rumour was current that Elizabeth had offered Arbella in marriage to Henri IV of France, if he could contrive to divorce his own childless wife, Marguerite of Valois.

Henri of Navarre had succeeded to the throne of France on the death of his cousin Henri III in 1589. He was a Huguenot, and his accession was hailed with joy by his co-religionists, who hoped now that an era of peace had dawned for them. Much against her will, Elizabeth, posing as the champion of the Protestant Faith in Europe, sent over a small force to aid him in subduing his Catholic subjects; but even with this assistance he found the task too great. Paris was worth a Mass, he said in the careless phrase that stains him through the centuries, and he returned once more to the ancient faith; but all was not to be so easily forgiven, and for a long time the Pope and Spain refused to recognize him. In 1595 he formed an alliance with England; and a year later the Duke of Sessa wrote to Philip that the Pope believed the real object of this treaty to be that Henri should repudiate Marguerite and marry Arbella.

Whether Elizabeth ever contemplated such a matter or not, it is certain that Henri himself discussed the advantages of the alliance with his Minister Sully. "He began to consider with me," says Sully, "what princess of Europe he should choose for his wife, in case his marriage with Marguerite of Valois were dissolved. 'I should have no objection (said he) to the Infanta of Spain, provided that with her I could marry the Low Countries; neither would I refuse the Princess Arbella of England, if, since it is publicly said the crown of England really belongs to her,

she were only declared presumptive heiress of it. But there is no reason to expect that either of these things will happen.' ” The King's own sentiment about the affair seems to have been cool enough; but all the same the rumour died hardly. Even four years later, an intercepted letter tells that “An English priest from Rome writes that the Spanish Ambassador has heard from France that the Queen will give Arbella in marriage to the French King and declare him her successor; but the French here say the King has taken another mistress, Mademoiselle d'Entragues, and promised to marry her if she have a son. Rumours fly that the King of Scotland prepares war against England, and that his brother-in-law has broken the ice already. Earl Bothwell has gone to Antwerp to be cured; all his designs fell to the ground, but the Scots are a false nation, and would sell their King and country for ‘siller’, as they call it.” Later, the same person writes: “The news I told you before, sent in cipher in great secrecy, is now in the Roman *Gazeteer*: viz. that the marriage treaty between the French King and the Grand Duke (Tuscany) cools; for the Queen of England has promised him a near cousin of her own, whom she loves much, and intends to make her heir and successor.”

This letter tells us two things: that whatever her feelings, Elizabeth managed to hide her distrust of Arbella under an apparent liking, and that James was by no means sure yet of his succession to the English throne. It does not necessarily imply any matrimonial overtures on Elizabeth's part to the King of France; her intention was emphatically to keep Arbella single—a bugbear to frighten James with; but she was quite clever enough to take advantage of the rumour, and in any case she did not contradict it. James grew more than frightened when he heard of it; he lost his head altogether, and for so astute a young man proved himself entirely the fool that Sully thought him. Nobody in their senses could have supposed Elizabeth likely to resign England to her old enemy France, and as a matter of fact there was never any question but that James himself was her nearest heir

and must in due time succeed her, but for two obstacles in the way. Neither of these was really sufficient to bar him, but Elizabeth encouraged him to think so, and all his fears were based on them. The first was the famous Statute of the 25th year of the reign of Edward III, reinforcing an even older law, by which no person born outside the realm could inherit land within it; but this was never really intended to apply to heirs to the crown, since Edward's own grandson, Richard II, was born at Bordeaux, and yet became King of England with no opposition. It was meant, in fact, to enforce the residence of the great nobles, who otherwise were apt to travel for years, neglecting their property, and even to marry abroad and return with so-called heirs, the legitimacy of whose birth could never be proved. The presumptive heirs at home often hotly contested these claims, and much family dissension was avoided by insisting that English birth was a necessity for succession to English lands. The other law, of the 27th year of Elizabeth's own reign, had been, it is true, devised on purpose to debar James if his mother continued in her malpractices. It provided that the crown of England could not be inherited by any person or the heirs of any person who should be proved to have conspired against the life of the reigning sovereign. Mary had been convicted of doing just this, and had been executed for the crime; but nobody could accuse James of complicity in his mother's act, and it was well understood that the law had been passed merely in the hopes that her son's welfare would deter her from conspiring further. Very few people thought much or even knew much of this Act, yet James had the incredible foolishness to write to Philip pointing it out to him, complaining bitterly of the injustice of it, and offering to ally himself with Spain and make war on Elizabeth if Philip would only promise to support his claims to the throne. In rather whining fashion he went on to complain that Elizabeth had "three or four times taken him into custody," supposing her to have instigated plots for his kidnapping, a matter never proved, and that she had always refused to give him his father's estate in

England, "nor would she deliver up to him Arbella his uncle's daughter, to be married to the Duke of Lennox in Scotland, at the time when he, having no issue, intended to make the said Duke his successor, heir to the crown of Scotland, at which time the Queen uttered very harsh words and of much contempt against him."

Philip paid no attention to this very undignified appeal, and James's brother-in-law, the King of Denmark, hurriedly pacified this odd young man, inducing him to remain quiet till Elizabeth's death, an event which could not now be very long delayed. Nevertheless, when in 1599 a rumour was spread that Arbella was to marry the Duke Matthias, he agonizedly assured Elizabeth that he "did not mistrust Her Majesty's meaning on that point towards him, Her Majesty having promised never to do anything to his hurt." There was, of course, no more truth in this rumour than in any of the rest.

The Court of Elizabeth changed a good deal during the last decade of her reign. It was no longer so brilliant; Leicester the magnificent was dead; merry Christopher Hatton died in 1591; Walsingham a year earlier, so poor and out of favour after all the years he had served his Queen and country that he was buried at night to save the expenses of a costly funeral. Sidney, "lord of the stainless sword," had spoken his last memorable words at Zutphen in 1586; gallant Walter Raleigh, in disgrace for his intrigue with pretty Bessie Throgmorton, the Queen's maid-of-honour, was sent first to the Tower in 1592, and then, after his marriage, to exile in the country till, in 1595, he sailed once more for the Golden West. Francis Drake died in 1596—he of whom it was said that "the narrow seas were a prison for so large a spirit, born for greater undertakings"; and although Drake was no courtier, one cannot but notice how with one accord the great names vanish together. In one year, 1598, Elizabeth lost alike her oldest friend and her oldest enemy. Lord Burghley was seventy-eight when he died, the most faithful of her servants, and the Queen, who has often been accused of heartlessness, wept bitter tears at his loss. His second son, Sir Robert Cecil, after-

wards first Earl of Salisbury, was already a trusted minister, and in him she confided much, but he never filled his father's place to her, and with good reason. She represented now the setting sun, and Cecil's allegiance was divided between her and her successor. For the last three years of her reign he maintained a secret correspondence with James, while at the same time many accused him of a design to marry Arbella himself, and proclaim her Queen immediately upon Elizabeth's death.

Burghley died in August, and just a month later Philip of Spain followed him to the grave. Philip had been married four times, and though succeeded in Spain by his son Philip III, left his English rights to his daughter, the Infanta Eugenia Isabella Clara Cecilia, on whom he doted, and for whom he had long hoped to obtain the crown of France, her mother, his third wife, having been Isabella of France, the only sister of Henri III, who left no children. The Salic Law efficiently preventing this, he formed various schemes for her marriage, one preposterous one being that he should obtain a dispensation from the Pope and marry her himself. Finally she was married only a few months before her father's death to the Cardinal Archduke Albert (dispensed of his vows), the son of the Emperor Maximilian II. She and her husband were always known as "the Archdukes," and to them Philip left the Sovereign Government of the Spanish Netherlands, and his rights of succession to the English throne.

A masterly letter, written from Rome by the Cardinal d'Ossat in November 1601 to the King of France, whose Plenipotentiary he was, shows very plainly how the Pope regarded the rival claims of Spain and Parma to the English throne. Parma is still and always his favourite. "The Pope," writes the Cardinal, "is of opinion that the King of Spain, finding himself unable to do anything either for himself or his sister (and as it is thought by most it will be impossible for him), will easily be persuaded to employ his mighty forces and all that the late King his father hath left unto him either of intelligences or interests . . . for the advancing one of the princes of the house of Parma, who are his

cousins-german once removed and professed servants. . . . The Pope first thought of the Duke of Parma, as the elder brother and his ally, and will do this the first and it only, if His Highness perceives the kingdom of England can be obtained without Arbella. But if, after the Queen's decease, Arbella should raise a strong party in England, and that for the easier conquest of the kingdom, it were necessary to join his forces with Arbella's; then in this case, because he cannot treat of a marriage betwixt Arbella and the Duke of Parma already married, the Pope intends instead of the Duke of Parma to bring in the Cardinal his brother, who might marry the said Arbella, and by these means they, both joining their forces, would sooner and easier compass their designs. . . . Your Majesty will be easily persuaded that he (the Pope) wishes them (the Parma brothers) that greatness, because of their alliance with him, and besides that they are strong Catholics and held to be good moderate princes, and in it His Holiness would think he did a work well pleasing to God and profitable to the Catholic religion. . . . And I can assure your Majesty that His Holiness hath of late sent three briefs to the Nuncio whom he keeps in the Low Countries, which are to be concealed till he hath news of the Queen's death, and then to be sent over into England, the one to the clergy, the second to the nobility, and the third to the canons, according to the several directions of the said brief, by which the three estates of England are admonished and exhorted to stand united together for the receiving a Catholic King whom His Holiness will name unto them." This letter was supposed to be a friendly and private expression of opinion from the Cardinal to Henri of France, but that it was inspired in every line is very plainly evidenced by certain scarcely veiled threats against the encouragement of Spain or Scotland, with which it closes.

Arbella seems by now to count for very little in the foreign schemes, but she could not yet be altogether disregarded. In 1600 there is a careless mention of her in a letter of the period, to the effect that her claims to be an Englishwoman consist in her being born this side of the

Tweed only, otherwise she is in descent Scottish. As to her rights, these are "in a female, fit enough to make a Queen Jane of, but she has not yet been thought of for such a purpose, I dare say, on this side." The writer can have known very little of the secret history of the day. A few months later, a spy named Kendall confessed to Secretary Cecil that he was told by Father Lewknor that the ruin of England was sure, that the government was all in the hands of one man, a professed enemy to the Catholics (Cecil himself), that Sir Robert Cecil intended to be King by marrying Arbella, and now lacked only the name; also that "Lord Shrewsbury, who can remove the stumbling-blocks to the marriage, is for him, thinking he cannot better establish his house; but that the Infanta is against him, and has great spirit, and could wrest the sceptre from Cecil." Whether Cecil ever contemplated such a marriage is extremely doubtful, and not long after, in his secret correspondence with James, we find a message from him to the effect that "My lord of Shrewsbury, of whose idol's sublimation, or at the least of a purpose to make her higher by as many steps as ascend to the scaffold, if she follow some men's counsels, hath been desperately sick." A few months later again comes the rumour that "Middleton, a priest, and Hill, a pensioner of the King of France, were employed by the King to make his bastard King of England, and marry him to Arbella, but the King of Spain would oppose it": a proposition thought by some to be favourably regarded by Elizabeth, though Sir John Harington writes: "In my soul I do not think that the Queen, even if she listen to these French suggestions out of policy, ever will agree that a goodly young lady, aged about twenty-four years, should be so disparaged as to be matched with a bastard of France under fourteen, and made a new Helena to burn our Troy dormant, and run away by the light." Further information also reached Cecil from the Bishop of London, who gathered it from the confession of a young man, lately come from the College at Douai. This youth declared that he had heard Father Parsons say, in the English College at Rome and elsewhere,

that all the priests made in the English seminaries beyond seas were sworn by a Jesuit before coming into England to be true to the Archduke and the Infanta. "As to the King of Scots, it is his right, but he is not capable of governing, and of no religion. That Lady Arbella is a notable Puritan, and they hold the Turk more worthy of place than she. That after Her Majesty's death they (the English Catholics) will either massacre or be massacred, and that the Pope and the King of Spain have promised to help them what they can."

Towards the close of the century, perhaps in consequence of her lessening likelihood to be used politically against the Queen, a faint gleam of favour seems once more to have been bestowed upon Arbella. It was customary at the New Year for the ladies of the Court to send gifts to their sovereign through her attendants, and, in 1600, Arbella's met with a particularly gracious reception. Her aunt, Lady Shrewsbury, sent "a gowne of white satin layed on with pasmane of golde, the vernewyse lyned with strawe-colored Jarceonet—delivered to Rauf Hoope": while that of the "Barrones Arbella" is described as "one skarfe or head-vaile of lawne cut-worke, florished with silver and silke of sondry colors—delivered to Mrs. Lucy Hide." Arbella's income was very small for her circumstances, and she could not afford so handsome a present as her aunt; but both were presented to the Queen by Lady Dorothy Stafford, a good and charming woman, who had been left a widow at twenty-seven, and was for forty years after the favourite lady-in-waiting of Elizabeth. In Lady Dorothy's case royal blood seems to have been no bar to royal favour, since her mother Ursula was daughter to the Countess of Salisbury, only daughter of George, Duke of Clarence; but she never had a thought for any one but her Queen, and Elizabeth loved and trusted her accordingly. Lady Dorothy's reply to Lady Shrewsbury is as follows—

"RIGHT HONOURABLE AND MY VERY GOOD LADY,
"I have, according to the purport of your

honourable letters, presented your Ladyship's New Year's gift together with my Lady Arbella's, to the Queen's Majesty, who hath very graciously accepted thereof, and taken an especial liking to my Lady Arbella's. It pleased Her Majesty to tell me that, whereas, in former letters of your Ladyship's, your desire was that Her Majesty would have that respect of my Lady Arbella, that she might be carefully bestowed to Her Majesty's good liking; that, according to the contents of those letters, Her Majesty told me, that she would be careful of her, and withal returned a token to my Lady Arbella, which is not so good as I could wish it, nor so good as her Ladyship deserveth, in respect of the rareness of that which she sent unto Her Majesty. But I beseech you, good Madam, seeing it please Her Majesty to say so much unto me touching her care of my Lady Arbella, that your Ladyship will vouchsafe me so much favour as to keep it to yourself, not making any other acquainted with it, but rather repose the trust in me for to take my opportunity for putting Her Majesty in mind thereof, I will do as carefully as I can."

The "token" accompanying the letter is officially described as, "To Baroness Arbella, gilt plate, 19 oz., 3 gr."

At first sight it seems strange that Arbella, who in 1600 reached her twenty-fifth year, should never, in spite of the constant rumours of her marriage, have yet evinced any personal liking for any of the men about her. But in early youth she had discovered for herself that there was no one in whom she could really trust; all who were kind to her were so for a purpose; even the favourite aunt and uncle meant to make use of her: her imperious old grandmother treated her as a slave or a hostage. The Queen frowned, and the Queen's ministers dared not smile upon her. In short, a more friendless being was scarcely at that time to be found in all the kingdom. The emotional side of her nature, repressed in youth, developed slowly, yet, being in blood a Tudor, it was surely there. And when at last an infatuation did seize upon Arbella, the intensity of her passion threatened to overwhelm her.

Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, when all the greater names have vanished from Elizabeth's Court, stands out as the handsomest, the most romantic, and the most profligate figure in what was growing to be a deeply profligate age. His mother, Lettice Knollys, was one of the wickedest women of her day. There is little doubt that she helped Leicester to poison her first husband, Walter, Earl of Essex, in order that she might marry him; nor afterwards, during Leicester's lifetime, that she carried on an intrigue with Sir Christopher Blount, whom she later wedded; while her two daughters, Dorothy and Penelope, the notorious Lady Rich, rivalled her in shamelessness and license. Young Essex was born in 1567, and, under the auspices of his stepfather, the Earl of Leicester, fought valiantly in the Low Countries, and when brought to Court quickly gained the "singular countenance" of Elizabeth. This he jeopardized by a secret marriage with Frances Walsingham, the widow of Philip Sidney, but was soon forgiven, and in 1591 sent in command of the English forces to help Henri IV of France. His most brilliant exploit was his share in the capture of Cadiz, in 1596, and in 1597 he was made Earl Marshal, and a year later Chancellor of Cambridge. Envious and vain as any woman, he was bitterly jealous of all praise bestowed on other leaders, and in especial hated Raleigh as his chief rival in renown. He would sulk for days, like a schoolgirl, at any favour shown to another, and would use such language to Elizabeth as none other had ever dared. Of this, however, he made a principle, and Bacon, then his friend, writes: "He had a sort of settled opinion that the Queen should be brought to nothing but by a kind of necessity or authority; and I well remember when by violent courses at any time he had got his will, he would ask me, 'Now Sir, whose principles be true?' and I would say to him, 'My Lord, these courses be like to hot water, they will help at a pang, but if you use them you shall spoil the stomach: and you shall be fain still to make them stronger and stronger, and yet in the end they will lose their operation.'" The mere audacity of his method certainly won Essex immunity for a time,

and, indeed, to this graceful, graceless boy, remotely by her mother's side kin to herself, it seemed the gaunt old Queen could deny nothing and would forgive all. She herself was over seventy now, and though Essex, as every other noble at Court, paid her at times extravagant and vividly worded compliments, it is hardly possible to believe that she can seriously have supposed him in love with her, or have permitted herself to fall in love with him. She treated him as a spoilt child rather; but would most certainly have been furiously angry had she for one moment suspected that his allegiance had ever wavered from her. For his wife he soon ceased to care, but his intrigues with the other women of the Court were common knowledge—to all but the Queen. And this was the man to whom the unhappy Arbella Stuart at last lost her heart.

From the first it was evident that the affair could come to no happy issue, and, since Arbella was a good and pure woman, to no shameful one. This must have been a new experience for Essex, who did not usually find his wooing hard, but probably to him it hardly counted as a love-affair at all, while to her at the time it stood supreme. A passionate gratitude is shown in her every mention of him: "I may well say I never had nor never shall have the like friend"; she cried after his death: "And were not I unthankfully forgetful if I should not remember my noble friend, who graced me, by Her Majesty's command disgraced orphan, unfound ward, unproved prisoner, undeserved exile, in his greatest and happy fortunes, to the adventure of eclipsing Her Majesty's favours from him, which were so dear, so welcome to him?" Their meetings were, of necessity, very secret: "None other dare visit me in my distress," she says; ". . . and the Earl of Essex, then in highest favour, durst scarcely steal a salute in the privy chamber." But, cautious though they were, whispers did get abroad, though the mention of such in contemporary memoirs is very rare. Sir John Harington, in his *Tract on the Succession to the Crown*, written somewhere between 1601 and 1602, says: "My Lady Arbella also now began

to be spoken of and much commended, as she is well worthy for many noble parts, and the Earl of Essex, in some glancing speeches, gave occasion to have both himself and her honourable friends to be suspected of that which I suppose was no part of their meaning"; whilst rumours also reached the greedy ear of James, well served by his spies at the English Court. Coupled with the talk of an intrigue came the alarm that Arbella had at last succumbed to the persuasions of the Jesuits and joined the Church of Rome, a story accounted for by the fact that Essex, who had at first hated his mother's third husband, Christopher Blount, now held him high in friendship; that Blount, who was a violent Papist, had introduced many of his co-religionists to the young man, and that it was popularly believed that Essex had secretly become a Catholic himself. From this to his conversion of Arbella was but a step in speculation, and though the whole tale was an entire fabrication, James, perhaps judging others by himself, immediately believed it true, and wrote—he of whom the Catholics themselves said that "he had no religion"—in a strain of grieved remonstrance to Lord Henry Howard—

"I am from my heart sorry for this accident fallen to Arbell, but as nature enforceth me to love her as the creature nearest of kin to me next my own children, so would I, for her own weal, that such order were taken as she might be preserved from evil company, and that evil inclined persons might not have access unto her to supplant, abusing of the frailty of her youth and sex; for if it be true, as I am credibly informed, that she is lately moved by the persuasion of the Jesuits to change her religion and declare herself Catholic, it may easily be judged that she hath been very evil attended on by them that should have had greater care of her, when persons so odious, not only to all good Englishmen, but to all the rest of the world, Spain only excepted, should have access to have conferred with her at such leisure as to have disputed and moved her in matters of religion."

This covert hit at the Shrewsburys fell harmlessly to the ground, and indeed one guesses that Arbella spoke little to her aunt of her friendship with Essex, and that they were scarcely upon so good terms as usual at this time. Lord Henry Howard writes to Scotland that "the league is very strong between Sir Walter Raleigh and my Lady of Shrewsbury and Sir Walter Raleigh's wife. She is a most dangerous woman, and full of her father's inventions." The last sentence more probably refers to Lady Raleigh than to Lady Shrewsbury, of whom it is usually quoted; but the mention shows that the Shrewsburys were upon intimate terms with the chief enemies of Essex. In a Court full of spies and scandal, where Essex was the most admired hero, and Arbella herself might any day become Queen, it is amazing how the secret of their friendship was so closely kept; for although it certainly reached Scotland, there is hardly a reference to it in any English letters of the day. Not less surprising is it that Essex should have taken no advantage of a liking so difficult to obtain and so gratifying to all his ambitions; but for the moment he cared only for the command in Ireland, and teased Elizabeth every hour of the day to give it him. She knew too well that he was not the man to deal with so difficult a problem, and steadfastly refused, till at last one day his language became even more violent than usual, and turning his back upon her, he raged that "her condition was as crooked as her carcase." An outspoken woman herself all her life, Elizabeth had never been addressed like this before, and springing from her seat, she gave him a box on the ears and told him to "Go and be hanged." They were never again entirely reconciled, but Essex got his Irish appointment, and poor Arbella, thoughtless of herself, rejoiced that he should have it.

Her romance was destined to rush hurriedly to a tragic close, and the tragedy was the darker in that none knew it for hers. Her name never appeared, and through all the sickening anxieties of Essex's rebellion, trial and death, she had to suffer in silence. Elizabeth had, of course, been right, and the Earl proved useless in Ireland. In six

months his army was reduced to a quarter of its strength; without authority he made truce with the Irish chiefs, left his post, and hurried home to London, where he burst into the Queen's bedroom, stained and muddy with travel. She does not seem much to have resented this, but he was immediately after imprisoned for criminal negligence in his command, and deprived of all his dignities. Once released, he declared that Elizabeth's advisers were his enemies, and that he would raise London to destroy them and seize her person. On Sunday, the 8th of February, 1601, while the Queen sat at meat, he made his attempt; but when they told her what was happening, she proudly said: "He who placed me in this seat will preserve me in it"; and went calmly on with her dinner. On the 19th of February Essex was found guilty of high treason by his peers, and on Ash Wednesday, the 25th, he was beheaded in the Tower.

The story of the Countess of Nottingham and the ring which she failed to deliver to the Queen seems purely apocryphal; but there is no doubt that Elizabeth felt the death of Essex deeply, and was never the same woman after it. She had no more favourites; and although she made great show of physical health and cheerful spirits, her health failed steadily from this day. A year later, in March 1602, Father Anthony Rivers, writing to Father Parsons abroad, reports that "The ache of the Queen's arm hath fallen into her side, but she is still, thanks to God, frolicky and merry, only her face sheweth some decay, which to conceal, when she cometh in public she putteth many fine cloths into her mouth to bear out her cheeks, and sometimes as she is walking she will put off her petticoat, as seeming too hot when others shake with cold." In the summer news came that the ache in the Queen's side "increaseth and the like beginneth also in her thigh"; in July she "hunted with great show of vigour and ability"; in September Cecil writes that "The Queen our sovereign was never so gallant for many years nor so set upon jollity"; and yet another on the same date notes that she "refused help to enter her barge, whereby stumbling, she bruised her shins."

CHAPTER VII

MYSTERY (1601-2)

EITHER Arbella was not so good an actress as Elizabeth, or else she did not forget so easily. After the death of Essex, she was very wretched for some time, and in the autumn left London to return to her grandmother at Hardwick. This may have been because Elizabeth had become aware of her infatuation for Essex, and in a rage at her presumption had sent her home; or perhaps she herself, finding the Court intolerable in her sorrow, hoped to find peace and tranquillity in the solitudes of the country. If the latter were the case, she was bitterly disappointed. Old Lady Shrewsbury apparently regarded her as a prisoner under the Queen's displeasure, and in any case still treated her always as a child, made her keep the strictest hours, rated her soundly for her every independent word and action, and never permitted her to be left alone. Such company made of Hardwick a dungeon, and the unhappy woman of seven-and-twenty felt herself driven slowly mad by it. Her only longing now was to escape, but this was not easy. Eyes watched her on every side: if she chafed at restrictions she was accused of ingratitude. She seems to have quarrelled with Gilbert and Mary, probably over the Essex affair, for they never came to see her. She submitted herself as long as possible to her grandmother's autocracy, but there is always a breaking-point even for the most patient; and if parents and guardians will be tyrants, their children must prove either slaves or rebels. Arbella had borne slavery long enough. Always at the will of others, she ached now only for silence and privacy in which to nurse her wounded heart, far from the cruel jibes of the fierce old woman who had no mercy for woes too tender to confide. Lady

Shrewsbury was angry that Arbella had now a grief she could not tell, and her anger made her more cruel than she can have known. The younger woman felt desperately that in flight lay her only hope.

“The truth is,” says her chaplain, John Starkey, “that she, seeming to be discontented, told me about Easter that she thought of all the means she could to get from home, by reason she was hardly used (as she said) in spiteful and disgraceful words, and her most plagued withal, which she could not endure; and this seemed not feigned, for often-times, being at her book, she would break forth into tears. Whereupon,” he continues, eager evidently to feather his own nest, and make some use of his Lady’s misfortunes, “I promised that, if it would please her to use my service, I would deliver her letters or messages while I stayed in town, and told her that I was resolved not to stay in the country any longer, and acquainted her ladyship with the cause, for that I was weary of the servitude and homage wherein I have lived more than ten years, having taught one of Mr. William Cavendish’s sons six or seven years without any consideration for my gains, and being then enjoined to teach another his ABC; and, besides, my living, which was given me, being indirectly detained from me by Mr. Cavendish, who had kept the same in his hands seven or eight years, whereas his faithful promise to me was that I should be restored to it in very short time.”

Arbella, friendless and alone, caught eagerly at the offer of this rather vague assistance, and promised Starkey, if ever her own mistress, to procure a good living for him, and retain him always as her chaplain. Her position was cruelly hampered by being kept very short of money, her grandmother having even “threatened to take away her jewels, but she had prevented her by sending them away into Yorkshire,” says Starkey. She was obliged, therefore, to borrow from the chaplain, and had in all £279 2s. 2d. from him, of which she had paid back £199 in the following year; but it is doubtful if she would have indebted herself to him at all had she known how broken

a reed he was destined to prove to her. Later, when the storm broke, and he was accused of aiding her escape, he could only exclaim helplessly that "I am persuaded there was no such matter, and if there had been, her ladyship knoweth well that I supported her rather to endure her grief and discontent patiently, than by an inconvenient course to prejudice herself." He complained that the world had been led to "believe that I was very desirous and forward to gain her removal from her lady grandmother," and that "She told me she had good friends, and more than all the world knew of, but I forbear to set down greater matters which she in her conscience doth know are true, being sorry that such a one should be made an instrument of the bad practices of others, whose device was to turn me out of my living and to deprive me of my life, the Lord forgive them all. God grant the Queen's Majesty's most gracious reign long to continue over this realm."

These statements are contained in a confession written by Starkey a year later, when Arbella's affairs were in very serious confusion indeed; but his chief and avowed object in it was not to help her, but to exonerate his own conduct. "My friends and kinsfolk I protest are blameless and without fault, being unacquainted with this matter. . . . For my own part, I was busied about the recovery of my parsonage." At the moment, however, Arbella seems to have trusted him considerably, and when he left Hardwick, according to his wish, that summer. "At my coming away the Lady Arbella told me she thought her grandmother would stay my book, and therefore advised me, if I had anything of worth, to lock it up, and she would be as careful of it as if it had been her own. . . ." She also "sent the key of her coffer by me to search for a pearl of £20 which she doubted she had lost, but this was only a device." He sent her presents from London, apparently rather injudicious ones: a Bible of his own, with his initials, J.A.S., upon it, afterwards supposed by some to have been a love-gift, and the letters meant for John and Arbella Stuart or Starkey; and also a book with,

as he says himself, "an unfit print upon the cover, which unadvisedly was given Lady Arbella by me, for which gross error committed by me, though unwittingly, to the impairing of her ladyship's fame and good name, I am so inwardly vexed that if I had a thousand lives I would willingly spend them all to redeem the least part of her reputation. Such is her virtuous disposition, and so excellent are those ornaments with which her honour's mind is adorned, as that they may be the rather admired than imitated. Most unfortunate then, was I in committing such a fault, although I protest upon my salvation I never intended any such matter as from this might unjustly be gathered; the meanest reason I do think could only imagine that: and this is the cause, that her honour in just reading hath been made an instrument."

Anxious though he may have been to help, Starkey could be of little real assistance to Arbella, and it was of no use for her to think of flight unless she had friends who were prepared to receive her. Could some of the foreign plotters have reached her now, they might have met with a more kindly reception, but while she was thus at her wits' end in the country, none knew of her extremity; and the same vague rumours of marriage played around her name in London. Father Rivers writes in March that "The arrival of the Duke of Nevers is daily expected.

. . . The general opinion is that he cometh of curiosity to see the Court and country, but in special I hear he desireth secretly a sight of the Lady Arbella: for that some great person here, bearing the French in hand that it shall be in his power to dispose of the succession after Her Majesty's death, by preferring whom he please to match with the said lady; this duke, albeit a married man, being a great favourite, is fed in hope thereof for himself (if his wife die) or some friend, and thereupon, under colour of some other embassy, undertaketh this voyage. How probable this may be I leave to your consideration, only this much I can assure you, that a house is here preparing privately in London, where the good lady, with those with whom she liveth, are expected after

Easter." The assurance, followed a few days later by the announcement that "Arbella is shortly to come to town," was about as trustworthy as the news of Nevers's visit at all, since he had no intention of visiting England, and came no farther than the Netherlands; but Rivers was considerably nearer the truth at the end of July, when he wrote: "I hear some have an intention to marry the Earl of Hertford's second son with Arbella, and to carry it that way, but these *supra nos nihil ad nos.*"

This is the first occasion upon which we find allusion to any possible alliance between Arbella and the House of Hertford, and it is therefore important to point out here the reasons which, to the Queen, would make such a proposal the most hated and objectionable that could be conceived. Briefly they are these: Lord Hertford's son held a claim to the crown second only in England to Arbella's own, and he derived it in this manner: Lady Jane Grey had two younger sisters, Katherine and Mary, and when in 1553 Jane was married to Guildford Dudley, Katherine at the same time became the bride of Henry, Lord Herbert, eldest son of the Earl of Pembroke. Both these marriages were entered into for purely political reasons, and at a time when the Greys appeared likely to become the royal family of England; and immediately after the downfall and death of the Nine Days' Queen and her father, Herbert denied his marriage and divorced his wife Katherine, still only a child of fifteen. Grudgingly allowed at Court during Mary's reign, Katherine, a timid, gentle girl, whom the misfortunes of her family had frightened into self-effacement, formed a deep friendship with Lady Jane Seymour, daughter of the late Protector Somerset, who, though younger than herself, and extremely delicate, was of a far more energetic character. With the Queen's permission, Katherine stayed a month or so at her friend's home, where she can, it is true, have had little in sympathy with Jane's mother, Anne, Duchess of Somerset, that "mannish or rather devilish woman, for many imperfectibilities intolerable, but for pride monstrous,

exceeding subtle and violent " (so says Sir John Hayward); but where she very quickly fell in love with Jane's brother, Edward Seymour, later Earl of Hertford, an amiable youth, who lavished upon Katherine all the adoration of a weak but loving nature. Sister Jane alone being in the secret, the lovers plighted their troth; and when in 1558 Queen Mary died, it was hoped that Elizabeth would be gracious to the idea of their marriage. The death of Katherine's mother, however, delayed matters a little, and by the time she had ceased mourning her, it was already plain that the victorious Elizabeth intended to be a harder taskmistress to her young cousin than ever the sad and faded Mary had been. If Henry VIII's will were to be followed and the Scottish branch disregarded, Katherine stood undoubtedly next heir to the throne, and she was, in consequence, as suspiciously watched and arrogantly treated as Arbella Stuart a generation later; many indeed are the historical parallels drawn between these two unfortunate princesses. The very suggestion of marriage in connection with Katherine would have been regarded by Elizabeth as high treason, and, at last, the young couple determined to wait no longer on fortune, but to marry privately. Perhaps, both being so timid, it needed Jane Seymour to stir them to the act, but in any case she undertook all the necessary arrangements, and one day, when the Queen and Court were absent hunting, she produced a Lutheran priest, and stood sole witness to the ceremony which made her brother and Katherine Grey man and wife. So agitated were bride and groom that they never even inquired or knew the name of the priest nor whence he came, but, satisfied that they were truly married, contrived henceforth to meet secretly as often as they could.

Very shortly after this Jane Seymour died suddenly; and when a few months later it became evident that Katherine was about to become a mother, great was the scandal at the Court. A singular incident is that in her first terror she should have turned for a confidante to "Madame Saintlow," Bess of Hardwick, then married to

her third husband and in a good place at Court; but Bess, determined to involve herself in no affair that smacked of treason, met her with little sympathy and helped her not at all. Katherine and Hertford were hurried to the Tower and strictly examined; but both boldly avowed their marriage and told all they knew of the circumstances, though neither was able to produce the priest who had married them, and death had already claimed the only witness who could have proved the truth of their words. In the Tower Katherine's son, the future Lord Beauchamp, was born; and after prolonged discussion the Bishop of London's Court pronounced that there had been no marriage and that the child was illegitimate. Much indignation was caused by this pronouncement, and since the gentle young pair were still kept strictly in the Tower, the compassionate gaolers saw to it that they met as frequently as possible still. A second son, Thomas, was born a year later, and this so infuriated the Queen that she determined they should never meet again. They never did. Hertford was sent to the strict keeping of his mother, and Katherine to the house of her uncle, Lord John Grey, in Essex. With two changes of prison, in wretched health and broken spirits, she sank slowly to death, and expired early in 1568, aged only twenty-nine. Hertford remained a prisoner for some years more, but was released at last, and later married twice again. Nevertheless, and although his character, naturally timid, had through grief and long captivity been broken almost to an abject fear of Elizabeth, he yet never ceased his endeavours to prove the legitimacy of his children, braving even further imprisonment and a heavy fine in the attempt. Hot-tempered always, Elizabeth could yet on occasion be mollified, but the Earl of Hertford she never forgave, and he passed all his days in mortal terror of her displeasure. His two sons, accepted everywhere as Lord Beauchamp and Lord Thomas Seymour, won no recognition from her, and, indeed, so virulent was her hatred of the entire family that Margaret of Lennox's granddaughter might more easily have won forgiveness for an intrigue with

Spain itself than for the least hint at friendship with any descendant of Katherine Grey.

In 1602, at the time when Arbella Stuart was sighing her heart out in a desperate longing for freedom at Hardwick Hall, Lord Thomas Seymour had been dead two years, but Lord Beauchamp had three sons, Edward, William, and Francis Seymour, aged respectively sixteen, fourteen and twelve years, and was himself a widower, his wife, Honora Rogers, having lately died; there were therefore, at least three eligible husbands in the family, to any one of whom Father Rivers's vague rumour might apply. The odd thing is that though Elizabeth had plenty of spies, and Cecil more, no whisper of such a matter should have reached them till some months later. The rumour itself might easily be dismissed, together with the fifty other baseless ones to which some passing allusions have been made, but that on this particular occasion it does seem to have had a certain amount of foundation, or at least Arbella herself believed so. She had now come to the conclusion that her only hope of escape lay in marriage; and since her heart lay buried in the grave of Essex, she cared only to find some good man who would receive, marry and protect her. In this state of mind she discovered, so she says, that some time during the summer Lord Hertford had bidden his lawyer, Mr. Kirton, go to an old servant of Lady Shrewsbury's in Wales, a man named Owen Tydder (who had been twenty years at Hardwick, and whose son was page to Arbella herself), and sound him on the subject of moving "my Lady of Shrewsbury about the marriage betwixt his lordship's grandchild, the Lord Beauchamp's eldest son, and the Lady Arbella." Lady Shrewsbury thought very ill of the plan, being well aware how angry the Queen would be did she hear of it; she consequently refused to have anything to do with Hertford, upon which no more was said. This circumstance does not seem to have reached Arbella's ears till late in the autumn, but it held out hopes of a possible rescue to her, and she thereupon determined to enter into correspondence herself upon the subject.

It seems that her uncles, Henry and William Cavendish, were more or less in her confidence, though, being extremely cautious, they would take no open action on her behalf, for all knew of the Queen's fury should a whisper of such a plot escape.

Early in December she asked John Dodderidge, a servant of the house, if he would "go a little way for her," and on his replying in the affirmative (for the servants were all devoted to her), she explained she needed him to travel a hundred miles. He demurred at this, fearing to lose his situation by becoming involved in some important matter, but she argued away his fears, assured him he would find friends, and bade him go to Amesbury, ask for the above-mentioned Mr. Kirton, remind him of his overtures in the summer, and inform him that if his master were "desirous of the same still, he must take some other course." Before Dodderidge could start, however, Arbella bethought her that a more direct way would be to get her faithful Starkey, then in London, to go straight to the Earl of Hertford and deliver her message to himself in person; and on Starkey nervously wriggling out of any such responsibility, she decided that Dodderidge should do this instead of treating with Kirton first. On Christmas Day therefore, immediately after dinner, Henry Cavendish, who had only arrived at Hardwick the night before, went out of the gates, and, calling Dodderidge to him, showed him a place at a little distance from the house where he had prepared a horse for him; and the good fellow accordingly mounted and set out for Tottenham, where the old Earl of Hertford lived. Arbella had already given him a careful paper of instructions, directing him to deliver his message to the Earl alone, and to inform him that "the matter hath been thoroughly considered by some of Lady Arbella's friends; for they think your lordship did not take an ordinary course in your proceedings, for it was thought fitter that my Lady Arbella should have been first moved in the matter, and that the parties might have had sight the one of the other, to see how they would like. For that if his lordship were desirous of this still,

he might send his grandchild, guarded with whom his lordship thought fit, and he could come and go easily at his own pleasure either to tarry or depart."

She adds careful warnings, however, as to the precautions necessary in case of such a visit. "If they come to me themselves, they shall be shut out at the gates; if locked up, my grandmother will be the first shall advertise and complain to the Queen. If dismissed, they must fully prove themselves to be no sycophants to me. For the first, let them make some offer to sell land, and Mr. Handcock and Mr. Proctor are good patterns to follow, so that they shall have whom they will to tarry in the house, and be welcome for a longer time than shall need. I desire this may be some ancient grave man; the younger may come as his son or nephew, and tarry or go away as we shall then think good. For the second, I protest your witness, either by word or writing, shall fully satisfy me. But it will be counted discretion in you, and confirm their good opinion of me, if you require them to bring all the testimonies they can, as some picture or handwriting of the Lady Jane Grey, whose hand I know, and she sent her sister a book at her death, which were the very best they could bring, or of the Lady Katherine, or Queen Jane Seymour, or any of that family, which we know they, and none but they, have. And let some of the company be of my Uncle Henry's acquaintance, who yet must not come to the house because of my Aunt Grace and his servants, but shall meet him at some other place. Their care is no more but to come speedily and secretly to Mansfield, or some place near and after you, and such intelligence as you have in the house will provide for the rest. You know none can better advise than John Good, whom I pray you acquaint with no more, but that it greatly concerns me, and he will, without any inquisitiveness, do his best, and perchance take them for northern rather than western men, and that were their best way both for to him or anybody else. No mention of the E. of Hertford in any case, nor of that county; if they can, Cornish and Devonshire men, and generally out of all parts of England, referred

to Sir John Biron's, therefore let them be wary, the shortness of time will help to keep counsel." This paper is endorsed: "This is the note which my Lady Arbella writ and gave me for my instruction to deal in this business, in witness whereof I have put to my hand. John Dodderidge." "John Good" is thought to have been an *alias* for Dodderidge himself.

It is interesting to note Arbella's entire unconcern as to the personality of her bridegroom, so long as he was a member of the House of Hertford, especially in connection with the fact that eight years later she actually made a genuine love-match with William Seymour, Lord Beauchamp's second son, at this time a boy of fourteen. She can, however, at this early stage have known but little of the character of the old Earl, who received her message with scarcely veiled consternation. His own experience of Elizabeth's displeasure had bitten so deeply into his spirit that his chief dread now was lest any child or grandchild of his should suffer as he had done: and though he never actually denied the proposal said to have been made by Kirton on his behalf, it is almost certain that if he did indeed initiate it, he intended, should it have been graciously met, to leave to the Shrewsbury family all the smoothing down of difficulties such an alliance would have required. He was at dinner, on Monday the 30th of December, when Dodderidge arrived at three o'clock in the afternoon, and rather tactlessly insisted upon a private interview immediately. After some remonstrance a semi-private one was granted—the rest of the household rising from their seats and standing apart, while Dodderidge fell upon his knees before the Earl and poured forth his message by rote. As soon as he discovered its bearing, Hertford, "looking very much moved and disturbed," interrupted the man, angrily declared that the whole affair was strongly against his wishes, that Dodderidge must set down what he had to say in writing, and the matter should then be referred to the Privy Council—and so with many harsh words and much contempt hustled Arbella's unfortunate messenger away and locked him

up in a room by himself. The same evening he was fetched out and examined again, but could, of course, tell no more than he knew, and it is doubtful which of the two men passed the more agitated and miserable night. Dodderidge's fears took the form of a pathetic letter to Arbella herself, begging her to write some assurance that she had really sent him, as the Earl would not believe but that he was involved in some plot, and she perhaps in danger; while Hertford, thinking best at least for himself and his own family to lay all before the Council, went straight to Sir Robert Cecil with his tale and his prisoner the following day. So now Elizabeth knew all, and the unhappy Arbella was betrayed.

The Queen, advised by Cecil, acted really with remarkable restraint. This might have been a serious plot; in any case it concerned the two people who, next to James, were her nearest heirs and, consequently, whom she hated most; and in earlier life she would have clapped both straight into prison. Instead, she now dispatched Sir Henry Brounker to Hardwick, where he arrived on the 3rd of January, 1603, with instructions thoroughly to sift the whole affair to the bottom. It was no easy matter, and had first, of course, to be explained to old Lady Shrewsbury, whose natural indignation at her grandchild's "deception" may easily be imagined. Brounker found her with her son William and with Arbella herself, pacing up and down the great gallery, and holding one of those surface conversations known to all of us at certain critical hours of life. It was now nine days since Dodderidge had left, and as his miserable note from Tottenham does not seem to have reached her, Arbella was more than anxious to know how he had fared. William Cavendish was also in the secret. Any sudden event must mean news, and here was Brounker straight from the Court.

He began diplomatically, with compliments to Lady Shrewsbury from the Queen, and, having walked to the end of the gallery alone with her, handed her the letter Elizabeth had sent, demanding an explanation of the late extraordinary happenings at Hardwick. Watching

her face, he immediately realized that she knew nothing, and, hastening to reassure her of the Queen's continued favour, he turned to deal with Arbella. Her he first thanked in the Queen's name for her last New Year's gift, informed her that her Majesty had been well pleased with her of late in consequence of her dutiful and retired behaviour, and then, having somewhat lulled her fears, sprang upon her the accusation of concernment in the Hertford plot. Arbella's first instinct—and let it be forgiven her—was to deny everything. She had not spoken with Dodderidge since some days before Christmas, knew nothing of his doings, believed him now with his friends. Sternly Brounker drew from his pouch the incriminating papers, Dodderidge's own confession, and her instructions to him, and held them before her. She was terrified, and knew not what to say, but it is scarcely strange that a bitter anger against Hertford and his conduct chiefly possessed her mind. However, Brounker could get very little out of her. She spoke again of Hertford's original proposal through the lawyer, confessed that she had at one time bidden Dodderidge go to him, but declared that she afterwards thought better of it and told him to stay. All this was related with such hesitation and embarrassment that Brounker saw he was only frightening her, and he therefore requested her to go to her own room and write out an account of the whole affair at leisure.

The next day she sent him a "confused, obscure, and, in truth, ridiculous paper," which he refused to accept; whereupon she produced another, equally involved and unreasonable. Between terror of the Queen and terror of her grandmother, the unhappy lady was in truth literally at her wits' end, and her wild and hysterical letters and speeches at this period are but a precursor of her condition many years later, when her mind really became unhinged. Brounker remained a week at Hardwick and then, finding it impossible to obtain any lucid statement from Arbella, returned to London to ask for further instructions, bearing with him letters from both the ladies at Hardwick to the Queen. Arbella's, which in spite of Brounker's description

of her excited state is singularly well expressed, runs as follows—

“ May it please your most excellent Majesty, Sir Henry Brounker hath charged me with many things in your Majesty’s name, the most whereof I acknowledge to be true, and am heartily sorry that I have given your Majesty the least cause of offence. The particulars and the manner of handling I have, to avoid your Majesty trouble, delivered to Sir H. Brounker. I humbly prostrate myself at your Majesty’s feet, craving pardon for what is past, and of your princely clemency to signify your Majesty’s most gracious remission to me by your Highness’s letter to my lady my grandmother, whose discomfort I shall be till then. The Almighty increase and for ever continue your Majesty’s divine virtues and prosperity, wherewith you blessed, bless us all. Your Majesty’s most humble and dutiful handmaid,

“ ARBELLA STUART.”

Old Lady Shrewsbury, while thanking Elizabeth for her kindness, indignantly denied all knowledge of Arbella’s plots, and only begged that the Queen would remove her grandchild from beneath her roof, since, after such lack of consideration, she no longer wished to live with her; “ and after that it may please your Majesty either to accept of her service about your Majesty’s most royal person, or to bestow her in marriage.” Brounker himself was not proof against accepting a purse of gold from the old lady and promising his best endeavours to further her desires; but for some days after he left nothing more was heard of him.

On reaching Lambeth on the 13th of January, Brounker learned that the Queen was too ill to see him. He therefore wrote a full account of his visit to her and her Council, and at the same time, through Sir Richard Bulkeley, conducted some inquiry into the character and doings of Owen Tydder. Tydder admitted that there had been some talk between himself and another Owen concerning

such a marriage, but declared that he knew nothing of Kirton, and was, besides, hazy about the date; thought it all took place three or four years before. Little light was thrown on the affair by this; but as by now the Queen and her advisers began to think the whole thing had been largely exaggerated, and as all had been so far kept very quiet and no outside scandalmonger had gained so much as a hint of it, there seemed no reason why it should not now be entirely hushed up and all go on as before. Unfortunately, however, Elizabeth had not reckoned with the absolutely intolerable situation at Hardwick, and thought to punish Arbella by taking no notice of her for some weeks, either in letters direct to herself or through her grandmother. Arbella had complained of strait keeping before, but she was now shut up in her room, and treated actually as a prisoner. She had, as ever, devoted servants; and her waiting-women, Anne Bradshaw and Bridget Sherland, did what they could for her. She also bethought herself of the many kind actions for which she had been indebted in the past to her aunt, Mary Talbot, of whom she had seen little of late, and whom she had apparently so deeply offended that she did not dare to write to her direct. She wrote instead, however, to Hacker, a confidential servant of Lady Shrewsbury's, and begged him to tell her aunt of her distress and implore her to come at once "with the like speed she would do if my lady my grandmother were in extremity . . . for the matter I would impart to her, and will neither for love nor fear impart to any other till I have talked with her, it imports us all, and especially her and me, more than the death of anyone of us; and yet she hath no cause to doubt, much less to fear, that any harm how little soever should happen to any of us so she come in time, that I be not constrained to take the counsel and help of others who would make their own special advantage without that respect of any but themselves that I know she would have. It is not for fear of a chiding, but some other reason . . . that I beseech her not to take notice of my sending for her, and she shall be bound by promise to keep my counsel

no longer than it please her after she know it; for else it is such as I dare and mean to trust a mere stranger withal, and will win her Majesty's good opinion of whoever is employed in it." Poor Arbella seems still very excited and rambling in this letter, and her aunt gave it no notice—perhaps it never reached her. Bridget Sherland then wrote herself to Hacker, asking him to meet her at Sutton, near Hardwick, and mentioning her young mistress's imprisoned state; but Hacker replied that he dared not come. In despair, Arbella wrote to Brounker himself, and Anne Bradshaw got her husband to carry the letter; but to this also no answer was vouchsafed.

Old Lady Shrewsbury found the situation quite as hateful as her granddaughter, and at the end of January she wrote again to Elizabeth concerning "this unadvised young woman." Arbella, irritated beyond bearing by the constant scolding for her "underhand behaviour," and cruelly mortified by the contemptuous manner in which her overtures for marriage had been received, to salve her wounded feelings now began romancing and weaving mysteries about herself. She believed that Essex, had he lived, would have been a friend to her; she thought her cousin James might yet prove one; and between the two she constructed a series of cryptic remarks concerning some imaginary lover "against whose love she had long stopt her ears, though he never requested anything, but was more for her good than his own," who was "famous for his secrecy and had more virtues than any subject or foreign prince . . . and had done many things at her command, and promised to procure her remove from the Countess of Shrewsbury's custody." All these and a great many more wild speeches served to harass and bewilder her already indignant grandmother, who, tired of the responsibility of her anxious charge, again besought the Queen to let the girl marry; she would "not care how meanly soever she were bestowed, so as it were not offensive to your Highness."

Bess was right, and marriage would have been the wisest cure for poor Arbella's far-fetched mysteries, but

it was one to which Elizabeth would never consent. Cecil, and Sir John Stanhope, Vice-Chamberlain, wrote for her in reply to Lady Shrewsbury, stating that a great deal of unnecessary fuss had been made about the whole affair, and that the Queen was prepared to forgive Arbella fully and give no further thought to it, on condition that she entered into no more negotiations without the royal consent. Her Majesty quite understood that her young cousin had been misled and deceived by foolish companions; but she now wished her to be freed from restraint, and to take her usual position in the household, lest the neighbourhood should begin to talk. Some responsible gentlewoman might accompany her whenever she rode or walked abroad, but otherwise life at Hardwick was to continue as before, and there was to be no escape from one another for either of the angry women. Arbella wrote as grateful a reply as she could for the Queen's clemency; and she might indeed, under the circumstances, consider herself very leniently treated. She protested that her only desire had been to be near her Majesty, that her grandmother would not let her go, and that all her plots and schemes had been to this effect. A few complaints at her hard usage she could not resist. "I have not dealt rashly in so important a matter, but, taking the advice of all the friends I have how I might attain your Majesty's presence, and trying all the means I could possibly make or they devise and none succeeding, I resolved to crave my grandmother's leave to present my service and myself unto your Majesty, and if I could not obtain that (for even that small and ordinary liberty I despaired to obtain of her, otherwise my most kind and natural parent), I determined that should be the first and, I protest, last disobedience that I would willingly offend her with. For though I have done very many things without her knowledge, yet I call the Judge of all hearts to witness they have been such as (if she had not been stricter than any child, how good, discreet and dutiful soever, would willingly obey), she should have had more reason to wink at than to punish so severely as she hath done. . . . And if it

please your Majesty to examine the whole course of my life, your Majesty shall find God's grace hath so mightily wrought in me, poor silly infant and wretch, that howsoever others have taken wiser ways, I have had as great care and have with more, and in truth mere innocence, preserved your Majesty's most royal lineage from any blot, as any whosoever. And I should have adjudged myself unworthy of life if I had degenerated from the most renowned stock, whereof it is my greatest honour to be a branch." This last is plainly intended for an allusion to Arbella's unhappy prototype, the Lady Katherine Grey, whose love-story had not passed without scandal. One notes the bitterness against Hertford and all his family underlying most of her letters at this period, and it was not, perhaps, unnatural.

It seemed now as though Lady Shrewsbury would resume her autocratic sway over the household, and her granddaughter would be reduced to her old and hopeless submission. But Arbella had discovered a means of annoying and alarming the old lady, of which she meant to make full use in the future. She promptly wrote her a long and mysterious letter, full of allusions to dear and powerful friends—of whom her grandmother knew nothing—who might, of course, prove persons of consequence, with whom the girl had become acquainted at Court, but whom Bess shrewdly suspected to exist only in her imagination. "These," declared Arbella, "upon whose opinion I have laid the foundation of all the rest of my life," did not think so seriously of her offence; "Pardon me therefore, I beseech your ladyship, if . . . I set down the true reasons of this my proceeding." The Hertford marriage, she goes on to say, was "propounded seriously, and by some desired, by others not misliked, but utterly neglected and rejected by myself from the first hour I heard of it till the last, and not more now than at first, for all my Lord of Hertford's discourteous dealing with me, who hath deserved better at his hands." After this preamble, her excuses for what she actually had done seem strangely inadequate. Acting on her friends' advice, she says, she

“determined to play the fool in good earnest,” and sent “base and unworthy persons” on the mission in order to show the Queen and the world how poorly she thought of it; and “I thank God it fell out better than I and my dearest and best trusted, whatsoever he be, could have devised or imagined, though we have beat our brains about it these three years.” Bitterly feeling herself deserted by the world, she has sarcastic comment for all she names. “Herein your ladyship’s wisdom and fidelity hath been at least comparable with my Lord of Hertford’s, so I have good witnesses, and more than for their own sakes I would I had had”; “With my Lord of Hertford I have dealt so precisely that it hath neither been in his power to do me more hurt than reveal all he knew by me, nor should have cause or colour to take anything so kindly, and keep my counsel. When I writ I wept, and I marvel it was not perceived, for I could neither forbear weeping at meal-times nor in truth day or night.” Of James she says: “All the injuries he could he hath done me, and his credit being, as he right well deserves, great with Her Majesty and his friends, marry I impute even all my wrongs to him, and freely forgive all them who have been his, unwitting I am sure, perchance unwilling instruments.” Nevertheless, again and again she asserts herself to have been acting upon the advice of some unknown and mysterious friend, whom she afterwards, when formally examined, declared to be James himself; and since James, as we know, had proposed a correspondence to her two or three years before, it is quite possible that there is some foundation for her statements; she may have complained of her position to him; he may have vaguely and indiscreetly sympathized, and she with her vivid imagination have wrung an encouragement to rebellion from his words. “He taught me, by the example of Samuel, that one might plead one errand and deliver another with a safe conscience. By the example of Samson that one might (and if they be not too foolish to live in this world, must) speak riddles to their friends and try the truth of offered love and unsuspected

friends in some matter wherein, if they doubt unfavourably, it shall but make their ridiculous malice appear to their own discredit and no manner of hurt to others. He assured me Her Majesty's offence would be converted into laughter. . . . So we first did deliberately consult and after speedily execute that which we knew for a short time would be offensive to Her Majesty, your ladyship, the Earl of Hertford, and divers others, and work an effect which I am most assured will be most acceptable to Her Majesty, and it is even the best service that ever lady did her sovereign and mistress."

After more such protestations, Arbella demanded that the Queen should allow her the space of one month in which to clear herself, and liberty to send to any Privy Councillor, announcing, "I will be accountable to Her Majesty, but not to your ladyship, for all that ever I did in my life, or ever will do. And I will reveal some secrets of love concerning myself, and some others which will be delightful to Her Majesty to understand. I will send some to complain of themselves. I will inform Her Majesty of some matters whereof Her Majesty hath yet no manner of suspicion. I will offend none but my uncle of Shrewsbury, my aunt, and my Uncle Charles, and them it will anger as much as ever they angered me, and make myself as merry at them as the last Lent they did at their own pleasant device, for so I take it, of the gentleman with the revenges. And if they will, as they might in duty, reconcile themselves to your ladyship, your ladyship shall command me to forget all injuries they have done me, one only excepted, and that is the wrongs they have done this most worthy gentleman, for whom I have already forsaken parents, kin, and all the world, Her Majesty only excepted."

Here it is plain she alludes to Essex, and continues with much rambling talk of love shared between herself and the Queen; but seems to return to James when she adds that she can entirely exonerate all her friends, and "I trust her Highness will with a smile deride their follies, and at one of their hands accept a poor present I am in

hand with for Her Majesty, and give another leave to deliver a letter or message to her sacred Majesty from me, her then fully absolved handmaid, and give us all leave to impart our joy of Her Majesty's pardon to us all one to another, and devise the best manner how to represent to Her Majesty the joy we conceive thereof. And make ourselves merry . . . and Her Majesty more merry if it please Her Highness but to keep our counsel; and I will instruct them and send them to Her Majesty one after another, and none living shall understand my drift but Her Majesty, the noble gentleman whose name I conceal, and whom it pleaseth them two to acquaint without limitation. One only suit will I make to Her Majesty . . . that it may please Her Majesty to suspend her Highness's judgment of me till Her Majesty see the end, which cannot be so soon as I could wish for. . . . These dark speeches I will never reveal but to Her Majesty . . . but I trust I have fully satisfied your ladyship that I am neither so disobedient nor so inconsiderate as your ladyship might think me."

Lady Shrewsbury did not know what to make of this letter, and sent it straight to the Queen, as indeed Arbella probably intended her to do, though she afterwards complained that the "first-fruits of her scribbled follies" had thus been forwarded "before I could either point or correct any error therein, great or little."

CHAPTER VIII

THE PASSING OF ELIZABETH (1602-3)

So far the world had heard nothing of the doings at Hardwick, and all might still have been kept quiet had not the wretched Starkey chosen this very inopportune moment to commit suicide. Disappointed of the preferment for which he had hoped, and terrified by the strict interrogations to which by now his rather half-hearted dealings with Arbella had led, he hanged himself, leaving behind him the lengthy written confession from which passages have already been quoted; and since such a matter could not easily be hushed up, almost immediately veiled hints and rumours began to appear in the correspondence of the day, with the result that very quickly the curiosity of Europe was again attracted to Arbella and her difficulties. Nothing was known for certain; but all manner of stories were rife, and several came strangely near the truth, though a favourite one concerned possible love-passages between Arbella and the dead chaplain. Henri IV of France was particularly anxious for information, and his Ambassador, De Beaumont, wrote him frequently upon the subject. Elizabeth's health failed more every day, though this fact was not allowed to penetrate beyond the Court, and Arbella herself knew not why, in reply to all her passionate epistles, the Queen answered only through her ministers. The long-vexed question of the succession promised shortly to become acute; and it was all in keeping with the traditional ill-luck of the Stuarts that so unfortunate a moment should have been chosen by Arbella after her long patience, not only to involve herself in a foolish and ill-considered marriage scheme, but, pardon for this having been pronounced, to continue besieging the

Queen's ears with absurd stories, when she had done far better to have let her very existence lie forgotten for a time. But Arbella was not wise, and she had now reached a pitch of excitement demanding the most careful treatment; while old Lady Shrewsbury's native shrewdness seems for once to have deserted her, and the two women rasped one another's nerves unbearably.

In spite of the Queen's commands, the aged Countess relaxed no jot of the severity with which her grandchild had been lately treated, and on the 6th February Arbella sat down in a towering rage, and wrote to Cecil and Stanhope, demanding "forasmuch as my lady my grandmother doth interpret the letter . . . in other sense than I, to whom it was Her Majesty's pleasure it should be imparted, do understand it. . . . Whether it be Her Majesty's pleasure I shall have free choice of my own servants, to take, keep, and put away whom I think good, either telling or not telling the reason? And whether I may send for whom I think good, or talk with any that shall voluntarily or upon business come to me, in private if they or I shall so desire, without yielding account to any but Her Majesty, if her Highness require it? And whether it be not Her Majesty's pleasure I should as well have the company of some young lady or gentleman for my recreation, and scholars? Music, hunting, hawking, variety of any lawful disport, I can procure or my friends will afford me, as well as the attendance of grave overseers, for which I think myself most bound to Her Majesty, for it is the best way to avoid all jealousies. Whether if the running on of years be not discerned in me only, yet it be not Her Highness's pleasure to allow me that liberty (being the 6th of this February twenty-seven years old), which many infants have to choose their own guardians, as I desire to do my place of abode? Finally, whether it pleaseth Her Majesty I should be bound within straiter bonds than the duties of a most dutiful subject, and servant, to a most gracious sovereign and mistress; of an obedient child or faithful friend according to the laws of God and man in the strictest sort, without claiming at all to infringe or abuse

Christian liberty? . . . And to set down the time—how long—and without ambiguity to prescribe me the rules, whereby it pleaseth Her Majesty to try my obedience.”

Having spent something of her anger thus, Arbella returns to the desire expressed in her letter to her grandmother that she might make certain revelations to the Queen in person; only that now, demanding less, she requires merely that some worthy gentleman, Sir Henry Brounker for choice, shall be sent down to Hardwick, bound to the strictest secrecy, to receive her communications and deliver them to the Queen himself. “And if I might receive Her Majesty’s promise, under two lines of her Highness’s own hand, that it would please her Majesty to keep my counsel, I should, with greater alacrity, deliver my mind in what sort it should please Her Majesty to command; and think myself happier of those two lines than of a patent of greater value than ever prince granted under the Great Seal of England. . . . And I beseech you let Sir H. Brounker be the happy and swift messenger.”

A fortnight passed, bringing no reply to this letter, and Arbella became literally sick with hope deferred. It is somewhat difficult to discover what part the young Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury were at this time playing in the game, since they remained ostentatiously close friends with Mr. Secretary Cecil. De Beaumont speaks of “the great familiarity and ordinary communication of Mr. Cecil with the Earl of Shrewsbury, uncle of Madam Arbella”; and Father Rivers mentions a little later how “It is observed that the Secretary and the Earl of Shrewsbury and his lady are grown very inward and great friends, and many secret meetings are made between them, where, after secret consults, they despatch messengers and packets of letters, and this sometimes twice in a week.” It is quite possible that they were working all this time on Arbella’s behalf, though it was considered politic that they should still appear on unfriendly terms with her; but it is certain that she held no direct communication with them. It seems, however, that their daughter, Mary Talbot, was with her cousin at Hardwick, either now or very shortly

after, and that Arbella corresponded also with her young uncle, Edward Talbot, at the Court; for, ten days after her letter to Cecil and Stanhope, in despair of receiving any reply, she wrote a curious letter to Edward, whom she addressed as "Noble gentleman," and, assuring him that the Queen had dealt very graciously with her, requested him earnestly to come to Hardwick "in great haste," and deliver a message she would give him of the greatest importance to the Queen's own ear. Writing apparently in calmer spirit, she concludes by begging him "in kindest manner commend me to my Lady Ogle" (his wife, and sister to the wife of Charles Cavendish), "and sweet Mrs. Talbot, whom I am very desirous to see: and entreat her to hasten you hither, for the sooner you leave the better for us all. . . . I doubt not but you would bestow a journey hither, and so to the Court for my sake. Your father's love and your faithful friend, Arbella Stuart."

Edward also did not reply, and Arbella, who had now been really ill for more than a week with severe pains in her side, grew rapidly worse, physically and mentally, and alarmed her wretched grandmother to such an extent that on the 21st February she herself wrote a frantic note to Cecil, imploring him to send Brounker or somebody down immediately, for "I see her mind is the cause of all. She saith that if she might speak with Sir Henry Brounker or some other sent from Her Majesty, she should be well. . . . She hath had a doctor of physick with her for a fortnight together, and enforced to take much physick this unseasonable time, but finds little ease. . . . Good Mr. Secretary, my most earnest suit is that it will please you to be a mean to her sacred Majesty for the speedy sending down of Sir Henry Brounker or some other, to whom Arbella is desirous to declare sundry things which she saith she will utter to none but one sent from Her Majesty. . . . I am wearied of my life, and therefore humbly beseech Her Majesty to have compassion on me. And I earnestly pray you to send Sir Henry Brounker hither." In a postscript the poor old lady tells, almost with tears, how that "Arbella is so wilfully bent that she hath made a vow not to eat or drink in this

house at Hardwick, or where I am, till she may hear from Her Majesty": and that in consequence she had been obliged to send her to Oldcotes or Owlcotes, a house she had lately built some two miles distant. Things at the worst will mend, however, and the very day this letter was written, Brounker set out for Hardwick with a letter from Cecil and Stanhope, addressed to the old Countess, and remarking that, "Seeing by the young lady's letters it is almost impossible to make judgment whom or what she meaneth," her Majesty desired that she should be fully interrogated by Brounker, and an end made to the whole business, after which "Her Majesty would have you only to use her according to our last letter, except when you shall discover that her actions tend to any dishonourable practices, lest the world should think she were to be used as a prisoner. Considering that your ladyship keepeth a house so full of discreet servants, both men and women, and having also Mr. William Cavendish, who, being her uncle and a wise gentleman, cannot but be an excellent companion for her, as well as an observer when any matter more than ordinary is travelling in her mind or put in practice." One has doubts as to whether William Cavendish was so entirely trustworthy as Cecil seems to think; but since we know Cecil himself to have been playing a double game, it is possible that he felt it to his interest to see that Arbella was not left utterly friendless.

Back came Brounker, therefore, and sorely he must have hated the houseful of excited women with whom he had to deal; whilst Arbella herself had no sooner arrived at Oldcotes than she learned her request was granted, and she must return to Hardwick to deliver the secret message at which she had hinted for so long. Her interrogation took place on the 2nd March. Now whether all her former stories had been pure invention, whether at the last her heart failed her and she found it impossible to speak, or whether the whole had been some frantic effort to "shuffle the cards" and escape from her intolerable position even at the cost of a public scandal, it is certain that when pinned down to give some intelligent explanation of all her wild

words, Arbella had none to offer. Asked as to the mysterious revelation, she declared that "she could not perform this promise till her friends had free access unto her again, which as yet they dared not take": but to every other inquiry she had but one reply—"The King of Scots." Who was it "against whose love she had so long stopped her ears, though he never requested anything, but was more for her good and honour than his own"?—The King of Scots. Who had been "so worthily favoured by Her Majesty and had done her so much wrong," and wherein?—The King of Scots. Who was "so famous for his secrecy and had more virtues than any subject or foreign prince"? Who had "tried her by all means, and knew her too stout to request a favour since she might command it"? Who had "done many things at her command," and promised to remove her from Lady Shrewsbury's custody? Whom had she "loved so well ever since she could love as she could never hide any thought from him, unless it were to awe him a little and make him weary of his jealousy"? With whom had she dealt "so unkindly, shrewdly, and proudly, and tried as gold in the fire, and had already accepted him, and confirmed it, and would neither repent nor deny it, whatsoever befell her"? Who was the noble gentleman who had taught her to speak riddles to her friends and to try the truth of offered love? Who was it that "would forsake her rather than offend Her Majesty ever so little"? Whose council had she "kept these many years and would do whilst she lived if the disclosure be hurtful to him and his"? Whom did she desire her Majesty to "grace and win his heart from her"? To whom did she "desire liberty to send, and then would be content that her grandmother should see all his letters and reveal them to all the world"? What gentleman was it "by whose love she was so much honoured that she could not be ashamed of her choice nor would stick to reveal him if she durst without his consent"?—To every one of these questions her answer was "The King of Scots."

Brounker plainly thought her a hysterical idiot, for he

was at no pains to argue the matter with her, but simply wrote down her reply to each interrogation, made her sign the paper, and returned to town next day. Nobody ever supposed for a moment that James was actually concerned in any of Arbella's schemes; it was taken for granted that she merely mocked at him, and no attention was to be paid to her ravings. There can be little doubt, in the light of her after life, that this poor lady's mind was very easily thrown into disorder; and at this time, never having fully recovered from the shock of Essex's death, the suspicions, the petty restraint, the utter lack of sympathy, and the constant treacheries with which she was surrounded, had worked her up into a morbid condition in which she was not responsible for her statements. Her conscience was clear enough as regarded all attempts upon the throne; she wanted nothing less, and it was cruel to accuse her of it. Her declaration of independence ran closely upon the lines of one more recent; and "Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," were all she asked. These she was never to receive.

Perhaps the person most disappointed at the result of Brounker's visit was old Lady Shrewsbury. She should have known her grandchild best; but so positive had Arbella been concerning the magnitude of the revelation she had to make and the certainty of her own peace of mind once she had made it that the old lady, against her own better judgment, had brought herself to believe in it. The day after the interrogation she wrote again to Cecil and Stanhope, of that "which to my infinite grief I find. It is not unknown to you what earnest and importunate suit my unfortunate Arbella hath made for Sir H. Brounker's coming down. I was in hope she would have discovered somewhat worth his travel, but now she will neither name the party to whom she hath showed to be so affectionate, nor declare to Sir H. Brounker any matter of moment, spending the time in idle and impertinent discourses. And though Sir H. Brounker hath left nothing undone that might bring her to conformity, he could not in any sort prevail with her, though she put him in hope from time to

time that she would name the party. . . . This is the fruit of them that have laboured to withdraw her natural affection from me, and to persuade her to all these vanities. They little respected her undoing so they might overthrow me with grief. Soon after Sir H. Brounker's departure hence, I look she will fall into some such extremity of making wilful vows as she did lately. She said before Sir H. Brounker that if she had not been suffered then to remove hence, she would have performed her vow, and the like I daily doubt she may do upon any toy she will take discontentment at. And therefore I most earnestly beseech you both to be a means to her gracious Majesty for her speedy remove; it may be the change of place will work some alteration in her. Sir H. Brounker can testify how careful I am to keep her quiet till I may understand further Her Majesty's pleasure. She most vainly hath prefixed a day to Sir H. Brounker for her remove. Both he and myself advised her not to stand on days or times. She is so wilfully bent, and there is so little reason in most of her doings, that I cannot tell what to make of it. A few more weeks as I have suffered of late will make an end of me. I have had over-great trial, now that she is brought to this extremity, that her remaining here is like to breed over-great inconveniences, which will not lie in my power to prevent."

Arbella herself, intensely overwrought by her interrogation before Brounker, went straight to her room after leaving him, and wrote out a paper which, blotted with her tears, may still be seen among the Cecil papers at Hatfield. Solemnly she begins: "I take Almighty God to witness, I am free from promise, contract, marriage, or intention to marry, and so mean to be whilst I live; and nothing whatsoever shall make me alter my long-settled determination, but the continuance of these disgraces and miseries, and the peril of the King of Scots his life, and if Her Majesty continue her hard opinion of me, and I continue in my lady my grandmother's hands; then, whatsoever befall, I have determined of a course which, if it please Her Majesty to like of, will be for Her Majesty's

honour, and best to my liking. But yet so far from my liking is it to marry at all, that I take God to witness I should think myself a great deal happier of the sentence of death, than of Her Majesty's choice, or allowance of my choice, suppose I might (as I am far unworthy and am not so unwise as to think) have my choice of all Europe, and loved and liked them better than ever I did or shall do any. . . . I am resolved to end my life in tears and solitariness or else to possess Her Majesty's gracious opinion of my innocence and upright dealing as I have deserved." She declares again her only explanation of the Hertford affair to be that "Experience had taught me there was no other way to draw down a messenger of such worth from Her Majesty, but by incurring some suspicion; and having no ground whereon to work but this, and this being love."

She offers, however, as satisfaction and expiation that: "First, I will never trouble Her Majesty with any suit hereafter, but forget my long desired land, and confine myself to close prison, or as little liberty as it shall please Her Majesty in the severest rules of wisdom and policy to allot me; and think it the highest favour I can possibly obtain, for I perceive daily more and more, to my increasing grief, I am and ever hereafter shall be more unfortunate than I lately thought I could possibly have been. Secondly I will make a vow . . . I will never marry whilst I live, nor entertain thought, nor conceal any such or other matter whatsoever from Her Majesty. . . . And if this be not sufficient reason to prove my dealing faultless, or at least pardonable, or this be not amends sufficient, I must confess myself void of sense and careless of anything in this world can happen to me, for my cause cannot be made worse any manner of way. In Her Majesty's hand it is to mend it, and make me think myself as happy as I can be (and will never be absolutely I perceive, such treacherous dealing have I found in this matter), and in God's time to end my sorrows with death, which only can make me absolutely and eternally happy."

For Arbella, this letter was decidedly lucid, far more

than another very long one which she wrote to Brounker himself the very day he left Hardwick, and sent hurriedly after him. In this she complains bitterly of her own insignificance—"Alas! what a dwarf am I thought at Court!"—and of being held accountable for "idle words, which is much, and idle conceits, which is more"; and after several long vague sentences containing neither sense nor meaning, she gives a somewhat more coherent and rather interesting description of what happened after his departure. She and her cousin, Mary Talbot, she says, spent a little time talking and crying together, as young women will, and then, "We walked in the great chamber, for fear of wearing the mats in the gallery (reserved for you courtiers), as sullenly as if our hearts had been too great to give one another a good word, and so to dinner. After dinner I went in reverent sort to crave my lady my grandmother's blessing. Which done, . . . after I had with the armour of patience, borne of a volley of most bitter and injurious words, at last, wounded to the heart with false epithets and an unlooked-for word, only defending myself with a negative (which was all the words I said, but not that I could have said in my defence), I made a retreat to my chamber, which I hoped by your charter should have been a sanctuary . . . but I knew by what was past what would be, and provided thereafter. I stand greatly upon my reputation, and therefore, resolutely leaving my weary standing, went away (but did not run away, nor ever meant it, I assure you), a good sober pace, and though my ears were battered on one side with a contemned, and in truth contemptible storm of threatenings, with which my lady my grandmother thought to have won my resolved heart (as my little love hath done), and on the other side summoned to a parley with my uncle William, I . . . went my way without so much as looking behind me (for fear of Eurydice's relapse). And, vowing I would never answer to those names by which I was called and recalled and cried out upon (for if I should my love might be ashamed of me, as now he may well be of himself), I took my way down with a heavy heart, and, being

followed by them it might better have become us both I should have followed, I was fain to set a good face on bad fortune, and there we had another skirmish, where you and I sat scribbling till twelve of the clock at night. But I, finding myself scarce able to stand on my feet, what for my side and what for my head, yet with a commanding voice called a troop of such viragoes as Virgil's Camilla, that stood at the receipt in the next chamber, and, never entreating them to take or give blows for my sake, was content to send you the first news of this conflict.

“ But I set me down in patience and fell a-scribbling, my lady my grandmother and my uncle little knew what or to whom, though they looked on, till, having written what I thought good, whilst they talked what they thought good, I was not only content to let them know it was to you, but to read it to them; and immediately leaving the disadvantageous chamber, where nobody could hear me or durst come at me, I went down a little lower, not pressed down with one abject thought of yielding, but because I thought there to have found some of my regiment. And so I did, for there was Key talking with a gentlewoman (what they said I never examined), and there I made a stand, bethinking myself whom to send, because they received such rude entertainment that it were enough to make me destitute of messengers, if it stood upon the loss of my life to send to my love. But, raising my spirits, . . . I went up to the great chamber, and there I found a troop of, for my sake, malcontents, taking advantage of the fire to warm them by, and amongst them one that I little thought had been there: who was that, Sir Henry? My sudden apparition coming alone through the hall, and coming in at that door where they least looked I should, made a sudden alteration and wonderment amongst them, for they that stood shrunk back as if they had been afraid of me, and with a general putting off of hats, to the end I should not doubt they would stop their ears against me, perchance expected I should have yielded them a reason of my going out at one door and coming in at another. But I, without ceremony, directing my speech to the

unnamed young man [Chaworth] who stood with his hat in his hand and my glove in his hat, said, as this bearer can witness, and so for brevity's sake leaving that to this bearer's report, my undaunted and most trusty servant. What happened after were tedious to write, for you care not what becomes of me, nor I neither greatly." And with that she bursts into a few more wild and bitter complaints, and so breaks off in the middle of one of them without either signature or date. A short and offended note, sent with it, reproaches Sir Henry bitterly for promising better than he can perform, and declares: "Fairer means might have laden you home with that treasure you came for without a quittance; but now I have no more to say to you, but I will say no more, think, say, or do what you list." The unfulfilled promise seems concerned with removing her from Lady Shrewsbury's care, but we may be sure, pestered on both sides for this, that the wretched Commissioner would have willingly done it had he been able. Both these papers were taken after Brounker to Lambeth by a certain Mr. George Chaworth, the young man wearing her glove in his cap whom Arbella mentions in the first of them.

Having once entered upon a correspondence with Sir Henry, Arbella did not intend to let it drop. It seemed impossible to communicate with the Queen; but Brounker might always help her, and two days later she sent him another short note about nothing in particular. It was Sunday, but "This day of rest doth not privilege my travelling mind from employing my restless pen." Apparently she regretted her former anger, for she closes, "Almighty God be with you, most worthy knight. Your poor friend, Arbella Stuart." The next day she was vexed again, and with some reason, for Lady Shrewsbury, cruelly exceeding the Queen's instructions, had refused her permission to enter her study, or even to send her page to fetch certain books she required. Poor Arbella, often wild and wayward, writes to Brounker with almost tragic indignation of this, to her, crowning injustice. She loved her books, and now was not even suffered to "receive the

comfort and good counsel of my dead counsellors and comforters. If you think to make me weary of my life and to conclude it according to Mr. Starkey's tragical example, you are deceived; if you mean to shorten the time for your friend's sake, you are deceived in that too, for such means prevail not with me. If you think it Her Majesty's pleasure . . . sure I am it is neither for Her Majesty's honour nor your credit I should be thus dealt withal. Your will be done. I recommend my innocent cause to God's holy protection, to whom only be ascribed all honour, praise and glory, for now and ever. Amen. For all men are liars. There is no trust in man, whose breath is in his nostrils. And the day will come when they that judge shall be judged, and he that now keepeth their counsel and seemeth to wink at iniquity, and suffer it to prosper like the green bay tree, will root out deep-rooted pride and malice, and make his righteousness shine like the noonday. I was half a Puritan before, and Mr. Holford, who is one whatsoever I be, hath shortened your letter, and will shorten the time more than you all, as he hath already driven me from my lady my grandmother's presence with laughter, which, upon just cause, you owe me good witness I cannot forbear. Farewell, good knight." The Mr. Holford mentioned here was a semi-official messenger of Cecil's, sent backwards and forwards to Hardwick to keep the Secretary advertised of all that passed there. Arbella hated him bitterly, and with little wonder. He seems indeed to have had offensively familiar manners, and to have presumed beyond his station in discharging the duties allotted to him.

This letter was written on the 7th March, and on the 9th that year fell Ash Wednesday, a day of bitter memories for Arbella and the Queen alike. Two years before, upon that day, Essex fell. No doubt had he lived he too would have disappointed her, but being dead, Arbella could clothe him with visionary virtues to her heart's content; and shutting herself into her own room, she deliberately fixed her thoughts upon him and upon all that had happened to her since his tragic execution. All day she must have

written, for the result of her meditations is a letter of many sheets, addressed again to Brounker, and opening with the statement that "As a private person I found all humanity and courtesy from you, and whilst I live will thankfully acknowledge it. . . . As a private person I would trust you as soon as any gentleman I know, upon so small acquaintance. . . . But do not deceive yourself so much as to think I either have or will confess my pure and innocent self guilty of love till you deserve that extraordinary trust . . . for why should I speak, unless you will believe? How shall I believe any good till I see it? . . . Admit I had been in love, and would have declared his name, I assure you on my faith I would have delivered it you in writing, and by my good will have seen you no more after till I had been out of fear of blushing, which, though I did not as I think while you were here, I should have done, or at least did, within few days after you were gone. . . . And you would have me trust you, before I be sure you will believe what I say, or have tried, or at least found, your friendship in some points, before I may in discretion trust you any further. . . . But hitherto you have dealt like a commissioner, your words have been questions and objections and promises and threatenings, but none of your own . . . but now I thank God your commission is at an end, and let me see what you will or can do."

She explains that "Being allowed no companion to my liking, and finding this the best excuse to avoid the tedious conversation I am bound to, I think the time best spent in tiring you with the idle conceits of my travelling mind, till it make you ashamed to see into what a scribbling melancholy (which is a kind of madness, and there are several kinds of it) you have brought me and leave me." "I assure you," she says elsewhere, "if you will come and beg the licence of my transportation, it will requite your, as you count it, lost labour and great pains with profit (which otherwise I think I must die indebted to you for, for gold and silver have I none, neither would you generous and rarely faithful courtiers take it)." Plainly she had

knowledge of that purse of gold Brounker had had from her grandmother; but for the most part she seems anxious to stand on good terms with him, and condescends to elaborate explanations, which yet are no explanations, of her absurd insistence upon the King of Scots' name in all her answers to the questions he had asked her. She might of course have corresponded with James, but all the world knew of his jealousy, and the little love lost between them; and she could not have supposed any astute courtier likely to have been impressed by her rather sententious remark that, "Because you know not the power of Divine and Christian love at Court so generally well, as for Her Majesty's honour and of the place, I would you did—you cannot believe one can come so near [as I] God's precept, who commandeth us to love our neighbour like ourself, as to love an unkind but otherwise worthy kinsman so well as nobody else (it seems to your knowledge) doth any but their paramours; which, if you can make him [James] believe, it will be an excellent requittal for his unprincely and unchristian giving ear to the slanderous and unlikely surmise of the Earl of Essex and me."

Here we have direct allusion to the gossip connecting Arbella with Essex, and indeed she can scarcely now turn a page without mention of his name: "out of the full heart the mouth speaketh." "This fatal day, Ash Wednesday," she cries; "and the new dropping tears of some, might make you remember, if it were possible you could forget. . . . And were not I unthankfully forgetful, if I should not remember my noble friend, who graced me, by Her Majesty's commandment disgraced orphan, unfound ward, unproved prisoner, undeserved exile, in his greatest and happy fortunes, to the adventure of eclipsing part of Her Majesty's favours from him, which were so dear, so welcome to him? Shall not I, I say, now I have lost all I can lose or almost care to lose, now I am constrained to renew these melancholy thoughts by the smarting feeling of my great loss; who may well say I never had nor never shall have the like friend, nor the like time to this to need a friend in court, spend thus much, or rather thus little

time, ink, and labour, without incurring the opinion of writing much to little purpose? I do it not . . . that my troubled wits cannot well discern how unlooked for, how subject to interpretation, how offensive almost every word will be even to you. . . . I voluntarily confine myself to tears, silence and solitariness, and . . . determined to spend this day in sending you the ill-favoured picture of my grief. . . . They are dead whom I loved; they have forsaken me in whom I trusted; I am dangerous to my guiltless friends. . . . I have conquered my affections; I have cast away my hopes; I have forsaken all comforts; I have submitted my body and fortune to more subjection than could be commanded. I have disposed of my liberty. I have cut off all means of your attaining what you seek till you seek it of me by such means as I tell you. What harm can all the world do me now? Even as much as it would do me good to follow your counsel—that is, none. My servants shall be taken from me, then shall I be no more troubled with their troublesome importunity and inquisitiveness. I shall but hear of my friend's trouble, as Mr. Holford's, and by comparison of my own think it nothing. . . . Had the Earl of Essex the favour to die unbound because he was a prince, and shall my hands be bound from helping myself in this distress, before I confess some fault which I never committed? . . . What fair words have I had of courtiers and councillors, and so they are vanished into smoke! . . . When all is done I must shape my own coat according to my cloth, but it shall not be after your opinion of this world, God willing, but fit for me, and every way becoming of that virtue in me, whether it be a native property of that blood I come of, or an infective virtue of the Earl of Essex, who could go neither friend nor foe knew whither, till he arrived amongst his unwitting enemies, from whom he ever returned with honour, and was received home with joy."

She speaks of "the despair the hard measure I have received drove innocent, discreet, learned and godly Mr. Starkey into: will you be guilty of more blood? You saw what misconceits you bred in him after twelve years

experience of me in such sort that he did not believe my true grief, whereof he was an eyewitness, and suspected me of a monstrous fault, which by his own testimony he had no reason for, but what somebody told him some untruth of me." This is not her only threat at suicide; but most of all her wrath is poured out upon the "two councillors" and the Earl of Hertford. She cannot understand—not knowing how near Elizabeth was then to death—why her royal kinswoman does not write herself, instead of sending her commands through Cecil and Stanhope, the latter being it will be remembered the chief enemy of the Shrewsburys; and she bitterly resents the supposition that Hertford and his son have been taken into favour again at her expense. "Doth Her Majesty favour the Lady Katherine's husband," she cries, "more than the Earl of Essex's friend? Are the Stanhopes and Cecils able to hinder or diminish the good reputation of a Stuart, Her Majesty being judge? Have I stained Her Majesty's blood by unworthy or doubtful marriage? Have I claimed my land these eleven years, though I had Her Majesty's promise I should have it? And hath my Lord of Hertford regarded Her Majesty's express command? . . . Doth it please Her Majesty to command me by her letter, in Mr. Secretary's hand to my grandmother, to be suddenly examined for avoiding excuses, and will it not please her, by a letter of her own hand, to command that which Her Majesty cannot command as my sovereign, but as my most honoured, loved and trusted kinswoman? Shall I many weeks expect that I most earnestly begged and longed for? . . . It seems Her Majesty careth not for knowing anything concerning me but to break my just desires. . . . Howsoever it pleaseth Her Majesty I should be disgraced in the presence at Greenwich; and discouraged in the lobby at Whitehall, it pleased Her Majesty to give me leave to gaze on her, and by trial pronounce me an eaglet of her own kind, worthy even yet to carry her thunderbolt, and prostrate myself at her feet—the Earl of Essex's fatal, ill-sought, and unobtained desire." Sadly she speaks of the dead Burghley, "A noble and unentreated

mediator, who now holdeth his peace," but who once delivered his opinion of her treatment, and caused the Queen to regard her "most bitter tears of discontent. I may hope Her Highness may do so hereafter. . . . But I am grown a woman, and therefore, by Her Majesty's own saying, am not allowed the liberty of granting lawful favours to princely suitors. . . . I confess I have been deceived by them I have best trusted, and I would they had all been foreigners and strangers that have deceived and wronged me."

Gradually she works herself up into a state of defiance against Brounker, Hertford, the Councillors, and even the Queen, "me, who am so unjustly under two councillor's hands, by Her Majesty's silent assent"; and through it all, poor girl, breaks the dreadful fear that sometimes her wits wander, or that if driven much further, she may shortly lose them and destroy her own life. "I can assure you," she rages, "all that are of my counsel are out of all possibility of danger, and out of your reach. Neither doth Her Majesty's commandment prevail so far, though her fame and entreaty be everywhere glorious and powerful. And for myself, I will rather spit my tongue in my examiner or torturer's face than it shall be said, to the dishonour of Her Majesty's abused authority and blood, an extorted truth came out of my lips. . . . Yet I shall be as well able to pay the uttermost farthing Her Majesty shall impose upon me, as my Lord of Hertford. Neither will I first fly and then endure my punishment, but first endure my punishment, and then I trust Her Majesty will give me leave to leave all my troubles behind me, and go into a better place than Her Majesty hath provided for me, these twenty-seven years wherein I have had experience what it would please Her Majesty, all my friends, yea, all England, to do for me, that did nothing for myself, no not so much as utter one word which had been better uttered for me many a year ago; and shall never be spoken to English man nor woman, whatsoever it is. . . . Therefore lay the axe to the root of the tree in time, and let me lose my head, which for less cause and upon no ground, but

my friends' faults, Her Majesty hath threatened to take, as I told you, whilst nobody will hinder it; and I shall joyfully and thankfully receive death as God receive my soul. I have recommended myself to the Lord of Hosts, whose angels have lifted my soul from my afflicted body, higher than they are able to reach that exceed Her Majesty's commission, and torture the condemned to exile with expectation." She demands almost fiercely to "be used like myself, with as great honour and respect and kindness as is every way due to me, who am not ignorant either of my birth or descent, nor senseless of wrong, nor hopeless of redress, which, as it is my duty first to beg as I have done, and after a while to expect from Her Majesty, so it is my duty to God to procure by all the lawful means with speed, because my weak body and travelling mind must be disburdened soon or I shall offend my God, and I were better offend my prince, and I shall be guilty of my own misfortune."

If Brounker read this long and rambling letter fully through—the merest extracts from its more coherent passages are given here—he must have groaned when he came to the last page and saw: "Now that I have spent this day in portraying my melancholy innocence in the undeceiving black and white you see; after my rude manner I must tell you true I think it will not yet be your fortune to understand my meaning, for it is not my meaning you should. . . . Almighty God be with you, I will not excuse my prolixity. . . . God forgive my excess and your defects in love and charity. From Hardwick this Ash Wednesday. Your poor friend, Arbella Stuart."

One wonders if Arbella really wished this letter to be shown to the Queen. Apparently she did, yet she must have known how much of it would rouse the fury of the dying woman. But by now Elizabeth lay far too ill to be reached by any but the shortest summary of news, and affairs in Ireland were besides of much more urgent importance than poor Arbella's lengthy outpourings. Nevertheless the newsmongers of London were busy with her name; and where no one knew anything for certain,

many were the stories told and invented concerning her. On the very day of her Ash Wednesday letter, Henry Garnet the Jesuit wrote to a friend, that the Queen was "said to be very sick, and Arbella diversely reported of, and likely to be sent up for shortly to be guarded." Another story was that "The Lady Arbella is already under guard, and some have bruited that she is married to the Earl of Hertford's grandson, which is most false. In course, they give out that she is mad, and hath written to Her Majesty that she is contracted to one near about the Queen, and in good favour with her, and offering, if he may be pardoned, to name him. Whereon some deem Mr. Secretary to be the man, others Lord Mountjoy, some forsooth Grivell (F. Greville), some one, some another. And now Brounker is again sent unto her, and as it is thought will bring her to Woodstock, where she shall be kept. What the design may be cannot yet be discovered." Anthony Rivers wrote on the same date to a friend at Venice that, "The rumours of Arbella much afflict the Queen; she has not been well since the Countess of Nottingham's death, rests ill at nights, forbears to use the air in the day, and abstains more than usual from her meat, resisting physic, and suspicious of some about her as ill-affected": while another letter states that "The Queen's sickness continues, and every man's head is full of proclamations and of what shall come of us after. She raves of Tyrone and of Arbella, and is infinitely discontented: it is feared she will not last long."

All this was the merest gossip; and De Beaumont, the French Ambassador, who should have been more correctly informed, is not always very trustworthy. In his letters to his master he was, however, chary of crediting reports. Just before poor Arbella's fall from favour, he had declared that James had lately made himself extremely unpopular in England, and everybody was ready to extol Arbella's virtues in his dispraise: but now naturally all this was changed. Many people did actually believe her to have married some member of the Hertford family, but De Beaumont never thought there was anything in this story,

and as early as the 26th February wrote to Villeroy: "What I have written to His Majesty concerning the marriage of Madame Arbella is confirmed by the judgment of the wisest and most penetrating. People are only astonished that the Queen has lost her repose for some days about it. And fearing that there is something greater than is known, since she shows herself to be so strongly moved about it. I think that this inquietude is natural and pardonable at her age without a subject dangerous enough to be dealt with, though it must only be attributable to her humour." Whilst to Henri himself, the Ambassador declared his belief that the whole affair had been raked up by "someone who has a desire to get the Earl of Hertford, who is rich and envied, into trouble." Here he was in error as we know; but old Lady Shrewsbury had thrown a great deal of unnecessary publicity upon the matter by the violent measures she had taken in guarding her house and imprisoning Arbella; whilst to most people, the affair was magnified into greater importance than it would otherwise have held by its deplorable effect upon the Queen. Filtered through the stiff despatches of her ministers, her attitude seemed strangely lenient towards the wayward and misguided girl, but to those around her the restless fever and "extraordinary melancholy" by which she was beset were all attributed to Arbella's actions. The Venetian Ambassador went so far as to term Arbella "*Omicida della Regina.*"

Meanwhile the Ash Wednesday letter, since it could not of course be shown to the Queen, passed instead into the hands of "the two councillors," who may have been interested by its frequent allusions to themselves. Five days later, on the 14th March, they sent severe instructions to old Lady Shrewsbury (by the hand of the hated Mr. Holford), beginning, "Madam, we are very sorry to find by the strange style of Lady Arbella's letters, that she hath her thoughts no better quieted"; and suggesting that, since the Queen will not hear of her removal from Hardwick, "you will deal as mildly with her in words as you can. . . . and that, as much as may be, her sending up

and down such strange letters may be forborne." Mr. Holford is described as "of good religion and much interested in her," and therefore "we should be very glad that your ladyship should suffer him to have access unto her, if it is thought fit, as often as she shall desire him." This was not likely to be frequent. Since Lady Shrewsbury herself does not seem to have any control over her grandchild, the writers suggest that Mr. William Cavendish, "Who is a gentleman that can please her, and advise her in due proportion," should be informed, "that Her Majesty and my lord do expect at his hands that he should interpose himself more decently towards the discourtesy of her meaning by these vain letters than he doth." He is to "ease your ladyship of that continual care which we see you take, the same being a great trouble to yourself and more proper for him, whose company is more agreeable unto her. And these directions we have thought fit to give forth, because the dispersing of her letters abroad of such strange subjects as she writes is inconvenient in many respects, and in our opinion disgraceful to herself, which maketh us the rather wonder that her uncles there are no more sensible of it."

But Arbella had not waited to see if her last letter would meet with any better fortune than the rest; she intended at all costs to escape from Hardwick, and her plan, in which her uncle Henry Cavendish and a Roman Catholic gentleman named Stapleton were concerned, must have been fully matured even before she wrote it. Cavendish and Stapleton with a band of about forty men had been for some days hidden in small detachments about the countryside, one of them having "a little pillion behind his saddle, which he hid with his cloak." The arrangement was that Arbella was to send them word when she could get away; but naturally such a large body of men lingering in the neighbourhood soon roused some talk. Cavendish and Stapleton lodged at an inn at Mansfield, a few miles from Hardwick; and John Chambers the innkeeper, who was evidently half in the secret, meeting one day with the Vicar of Hucknall, could not forbear hinting mysteriously

that he had "guests at home." Mr. Christopher Chapman the Vicar, asked, as he was evidently intended to do, who they were. "Why," said Chambers, "such as you little hope for": and named the distinguished pair. Chapman asked what they did there, and received the reply, "No matter what they do, but there they are." He then went home again, but this was not the last he was to hear of the affair. Hucknall, where he lived, was only about half a mile from Hardwick itself.

On the evening of Ash Wednesday, the 9th March, Arbella, having presumably just finished her letter to Brounker, sent her page Owen and another servant named Henry Dove to the inn at Mansfield to inform her uncle that she would endeavour to escape to him at Hucknall the following day. Owen then returned to her, but Dove remained with the party at the inn, and early on Thursday morning they all left together: as Cavendish and Stapleton went, they told Chambers that "Lady Arbella would thank him for their good entertainment." By ten o'clock they had arrived at the house of a Mr. Facton at Hucknall, having by this time a hundred serving men with them; and John Stark, a servant of Mr. Facton's, declared that besides these he saw several more hiding in various companies behind hedges and in dells in the neighbourhood, all within half a mile of one another. He heard his master's daughter ask Dove what these men were there for, and he answered plainly, "To take my Lady Arbella away." "What!" said she, "being no more company?" "Yes," said he; "there are not far off thirty or forty more."

Arbella was expected to come on foot, so Stark was told to walk the horses up and down out of sight of Hardwick House, "for fear my lady should see them and be offended"; but ultimately he got tired of this, and put them all in the stable. Cavendish and Stapleton rode across to the Vicarage, where they told Mr. Chapman they were "desirous to speak with Lady Arbella for her good, and they desired to have the key of the steeple, to see if my lady Arbella did come to them." Mrs. Chapman, who was standing by, exclaimed, "If you had been here on Saturday

last, you might have seen her, for she was at the church." On which Stapleton in great annoyance rose in his saddle, threw down his hat, and cried, "Why, what is this? It was long of my wife: she sent me word to the contrary!" meaning apparently that Arbella had said she could not come that week, and so he had gone riding with his wife instead.

The gentlemen sat down in the Vicarage, but before the key of the steeple could be produced, Owen the page and Freak, Arbella's "imbrederer" (embroiderer), appeared with a letter from her, stating that she had endeavoured to go for her walk at noon that day, but her grandmother had prevented her. Orders were given to the men to take out their horses again, and one of them said to another, "We cannot now come to our purpose, but about a fortnight hence we must come again when these blunders are past, but we must not come so many so near the house." Henry Dove said to Mr. Facton's daughter, "She cannot come out this day;" and Cavendish and Stapleton rode straight to Hardwick, and demanded to see Arbella herself.

Old Bess was in a pretty rage by now. She had quarrelled with Stapleton years before, and would not suffer him to pass her gates; but she could not deny her own son, and Henry was reluctantly admitted. He took Arbella's hand, bade her come with him, and led her back to the gate. The old lady commanded that no one should open it, and a furious scene followed in the courtyard. A crowd had gathered outside, which grew greater every moment, and Arbella, losing all control in her passion, concealed nothing of her feelings, but cried aloud that she was a prisoner and cruelly used; and if never there was a scandal at Hardwick before, there was one now. Calling to Stapleton through the gate, she begged him to return to Mansfield and wait for news of her, which he promised to do, and so went. After his departure, things grew calmer, although the old Countess would not permit her son to arrange any future meetings with his niece, and so at last he too went away. Arbella suggested taking a walk by herself, and was of course bidden to remain at home; and

Lady Shrewsbury thereupon wrote to Cecil, declaring that it was quite impossible for her to answer for Arbella's safe-keeping any longer.

Back came Brounker. He arrived on the 17th, pretending to have returned from his own personal desire for Arbella's welfare, but she very quickly saw through that subterfuge, and learned the truth. During the next two days he interrogated every one concerned in the affair, except Stapleton, who had managed to escape to London; but Henry Cavendish was ordered to go before the Council for judgment. Ill-advised as his action may have been, one has to confess some respect for Henry, as the only one of Arbella's friends who risked anything openly to help her. She herself, Brounker wrote to Cecil, had "neither altered her speech nor behaviour, but desireth liberty." He declared that he had tried to persuade her to patience and conformity, but since she still asked only for "removal from her grandmother," and since the old lady pressed with equal urgency for the same thing, while William Cavendish seemed quite unable to control his niece, he seriously recommended that she should be sent somewhere else, as the best course for all parties. His advice was followed, and within a fortnight of her wild scheme, Arbella was installed at Wrest House near Bedford, the residence of her cousin Elizabeth, Earl Gilbert's eldest daughter, who was married to Sir Henry Grey, sixth Earl of Kent. Here she immediately became tranquil and happy, and gave no one any more trouble while she remained.

Unquestionably Arbella's removal was the best and indeed the only course to pursue, not only for her own and her grandmother's peace of mind, but also for sound political reasons. The great Queen was passing swiftly away; there was still much uncertainty as to what might happen after her death, since she stedfastly refused to name her successor; and it was important that one of the chief claimants for that honour should be safely bestowed where she could be guarded by responsible persons, and reached on emergency without difficulty. Cecil and the rest of Elizabeth's ministers had determined by now that

their next sovereign was to be James; but so honeycombed was all society with plots and counterplots that no one knew what surprises might be sprung upon them at the crucial moment. It may therefore be imagined how distracting Arbella's singular behaviour of late had been to them, and with what thankfulness they knew her in safe keeping at last.

De Beaumont, writing to the King of France in answer to an anxious query as to whether Arbella had really turned Catholic, remarked: "I have never heard that the said lady was of any other religion than that of this kingdom"; and on the 13th March he reports that she had been brought from Hardwick in order to be declared the old Queen's successor. Here he was of course wrong, and two days later he wrote to Villeroy, "Whether Madame Arbella will be brought to this town and there made to live in prison or at liberty, I cannot yet tell you, such is the diversity of opinion and judgment; but I think rather the last than the first. Some call the affair a comedy, others a tragi-comedy. For myself I confess to you that I cannot yet see clearly enough to give any name. Still I always keep to my first and strongest opinion that I have sent you—that I see no great cause for alarm."

In the middle of January Elizabeth had removed to Richmond Palace, terming it, "the warm winter box to shelter her old age," and here she now lay in mortal illness. On the 17th March, Northumberland, writing secretly to James, confessed that for the past month she had been far worse than was generally supposed. Both he and De Beaumont agree that her illness was chiefly due to old age and general breakdown, but he adds that the death of her old friend the Countess of Nottingham (no allusion to the story of Essex's ring), the troubles in Ireland, and the strange and wilful conduct of Arbella had all combined to depress her so that she seemed to have no spirit left to fight against disease. "She sleeps little, will take no physic, is very dull, weak and lethargic." On the 19th her condition became very serious, and De Beaumont wrote, "All agree that she is worse. She shows an extra-

ordinary melancholy in her countenance and actions. . . . She has an insupportable fire in the stomach and a continual thirst in the mouth, which constrains her every minute to moisten it, in order that the hot dry phlegm with which she is pressed may not choke her. Some attribute the cause of her illness to the extreme displeasure that she has conceived in her mind about what has passed concerning Madame Arbella; others about the affairs of Ireland, in which she was forced by those of her Council, against her nature and courage, to give the pardon she had so long refused to the Earl of Tyrone. Many also declare that she is seized in her heart with remorse for the death of the Earl of Essex, who was beheaded just two years ago." So silent was she for hours together that one of the Council asked if she would tell them what troubled her, upon which the indomitable old woman broke out that "she knew nothing in the world worthy to trouble her." She added, however, that she wished to live no longer and desired death; and then fell into a cold sweat and lay without speaking for three days, till her attendants hardly knew whether she still lived or not. Strange tales are told of her spirit form being seen to pace restlessly about the corridors of her palace, encountered by terrified ladies, who, hurrying back to the room where they had left her lying, found her body there still, silent and motionless, but yet alive.

On the 22nd, the Lords of the Council decided to close all the ports; but the same day a small ulcer burst in the Queen's throat, and this seemed to bring her relief; but the improvement did not last. She refused now to go to bed, and lay upon cushions on the floor for ten days, "her finger almost always in her mouth, her eyes open and on the ground." Her physicians gave her up; and the ministers, headed by Cecil, came to her in solemn deputation to ask whom she would name as her successor. It must have been a strange sad spectacle, this company of grave lords stooping over the shrunken, red-wigged little figure on the floor. For some time she refused to speak, and they, wondering if she were still conscious, asked if she would have the King of France for heir. She gave no

reply to this, nor yet when the King of Scots was proposed. They then named Lord Beauchamp, son of Katherine Grey and the Earl of Hertford; and with all her early hate aroused once more, the dying Queen hissed out, "I will have no rascal's son in my seat!" and so turned on her side and never spoke again. De Beaumont writes, "The Lords of the Council have already begun to call together the earls and barons of the kingdom who are in the city, and have sent for the greater number of those absent."

About midnight Elizabeth died. Among her very few living relatives were her cousin, Sir Robert Carey and his sister Lady Scrope, and these two were commissioned by James to send him the earliest possible news of her longed-for death. He had given Lady Scrope a sapphire ring; and the moment the Queen had breathed her last, this lady dropped the ring out of the palace window to her brother, who had been waiting on horseback below to start at full speed for Scotland so soon as he had the sign. Having arranged frequent relays of horses on the road, he reached Holyrood in two days: and contrary to all expectation no opposition was raised in any quarter to the accession of James. Neither Arbella nor Beauchamp had ever desired the sovereignty; and all the Roman Catholic plots in favour of foreign princes seem to have begun and ended in talk. The nobles of England, including the Earl of Hertford and his son, signed the proclamation of the new King; and De Beaumont declares all was done so quietly and peacefully that "there appeared no sort of alteration or division no more than if the reign had not changed, every man having returned to his trade or business, and the Lords of the Council to assemble and dispense justice as before." Arbella willingly wrote that she "desired no other position than the King allowed her"; and though invited to play the part of chief mourner at the Queen's funeral a month later, replied with some dignity that "Sith her access to the Queen in her lifetime might not be permitted, she would not after her death be brought upon the stage for a public spectacle": and so remained quietly at Wrest House till she should know the new King's pleasure concerning her.

Queen Elizabeth was buried on the 28th April in Westminster Abbey, and for all the magnificence of her funeral procession through the streets of London, the nearest relative who could be found to mourn her was her step-aunt by marriage, the Marchioness of Northampton. In the Harleian Miscellany a curious old paper named "Petowe's April Drops or Eliza's Funeral," gives the order of the procession, of which the few lines describing the chief part of the spectacle may here be quoted. After a long list of troops and dignitaries came—

"The lively picture of Her Majesty's whole body, in her parliament robes, with a crowne on her head and a sceptre in her hand, lying on the corpes inshrined in leade, and balmed, covered with purple velvet; borne in a charriot, drawne by foure horses, trapt in blacke velvet.

Gentlemen ushers, with white roddes.

A canopie over the corpes, borne by six knights.

Six earles, assistants unto the bodye.

On each side the corpes six bannerols caryed by twelve noblemen.

Footemen.

The Earle of Worcester, maister of the horse, leading the palfrey of honor.

Two esquires and a groome to attend and lead him away . . .

The lady Marquess of Northampton, chief mourner;

Assisted by the Lord Treasurer and the Lord Admiral,

Her train caryed by two countesses, and

Sir John Stanhope, master Vice-Chamberlain.

Two earles, assistant unto her,

Fourteen countesses assistant," etc.

The waxwork figure of Elizabeth used on this occasion, that "lively picture of Her Majesty's whole body," may still be seen in the Islip Chapel at Westminster Abbey; and after three hundred years it shows a face of weariness

and "infinite discontent" such as makes the very heart ache for the woman whose life, with all its marvellous opportunities and great accomplishments, had brought her only to this. A great Queen, a renowned statesman, a finished diplomatist, skilful, courageous, far-seeing, all this was Elizabeth, and England thanks her for it to this day; but what of the woman's heart, the stifled nature in her, the self-love, the tyranny, and the bitter ruthlessness that drew such lines upon her anguished face? God knows, not we.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW COURT (1603)

So the new King came to England, and there was a new Court, and new favourites, and new manners and customs. An ancient prophecy much quoted during the last few years of the Queen's reign, to the effect that—

“After Hempe is sowed and growen,
Kings of England shall be none,”

was now held to have fulfilled itself, since the initials of Henry, Edward, Mary, Philip and Elizabeth spelt Hempe, and after them there were indeed no more Kings of England alone, but of all Great Britain.

James was never a popular King, either in Scotland or England, where for a long time people spoke sneeringly of King Elizabeth and Queen James. Both narrow and coarse, he was yet, however, a good man according to his lights; though all the dignity of history cannot make him appear anything but a grotesque and shambling figure, with the mind of a pedant, the manners of a boor, and the superstitious terrors of a savage. One has, however, to remember his parentage and his upbringing, than which one more unfortunate can scarcely be conceived, and all this explains much of his after career. Born at Edinburgh in 1566 of a selfish, vicious and dishonest mother, whose every tender feeling had been outraged during the last few months before his birth, he was given straight over into the hands of a drunken nurse, whose disgusting habits so affected the unfortunate babe that he remained a weakling all his life, and could not even stand alone till his sixth year. In 1567 his foolish, feckless father, Henry Darnley, was murdered by Earl Bothwell, and so convinced were the Scots that Queen Mary had instigated this horrible

deed that they forced her to abdicate in favour of her son, who thus practically became King when little more than a year old. Few mothers' hearts can fail to melt to the story of the "bairn king" when, taken for the first time to open Parliament at four years old, and sitting obediently silent through lengthy speeches, he watched with interested gaze a small rent in the shabby table-cover before him. Roused at the proper moment, he repeated very clearly the sentences taught him, and then added on his own account, "There is ane hole in this Parliament!" to be met only with horror and dismay, for the child's words were regarded almost as a prophecy, to be fulfilled within a year by the murder of his grandfather and regent, the Earl of Lennox. Always solitary, and wrangled over by stern men, soldiers and clergy, the poor child led the loneliest of lives in Stirling Castle; where he was educated by George Buchanan, who held a fierce contempt for his royal pupil, and ruled him with a rod of iron. Asked in later life why he had made a pedant of him, Buchanan sardonically replied that it was the best he could make: and long after James was King of England, he would wake sometimes in a fright at the dream that his tutor still frowned upon him. Nevertheless he loved books. Sully called him "the wisest fool in Christendom," and when he visited the Bodleian Library at Oxford he won all students' hearts by declaring that "if he were not a King he would be a University man: and if it were so that he must be a prisoner, if he might have his wish he would have no other prison than this library, and be chained together with these good authors." He was intensely superstitious, and laid great stress upon the fact that he was born on the 19th June, and first saw his wife on the 19th November, that his son Henry was born on the 19th February, his daughter Elizabeth on the 19th August, and his younger son Charles on the 19th November.

With such surroundings, and no kind woman to care for him in his youth, it is little surprising that James grew up to be a not very attractive personage. He had many favourites, Esmé Stuart, the usurper of Arbella's heritage,

being the first; and at the time he came to England Robert Kerr or Carr was the latest. He had good brains, was very timid, unnaturally cautious, and often mean. The diplomacy of the day taught him to be deceitful in sheer self-defence; and here we can scarcely blame him, for he was no worse than any other sovereign. He cannot be expected to have cherished any very tender feelings for his mother, whom he could not remember, who had deserted him in earliest infancy, and who merely tried to make use of him for ever after. Nevertheless, in 1584, when James was eighteen, she sent M. Fontenay, the brother of her secretary Nau, to Scotland; and Fontenay's report of James is worth quoting, if only to show the opinion he held of himself: "The King is for his age," runs the letter, "one of the most remarkable princes that ever lived. He has the three parts of the mind in perfection: he apprehends readily, judges maturely, and concludes with reason. His memory is full and retentive. His questions are quick and piercing, his answers solid. Whatever is the subject of conversation, religious or otherwise, he maintains the views that appear to him true and just. . . . In languages, science and affairs of State, he has more learning than any man in Scotland. In short, he is wonderfully clever, full of honourable ambition, and has an excellent opinion of himself. Owing to the terrorism under which he has been brought up, he is timid with the great lords and seldom ventures to contradict them. Yet his especial anxiety is to be thought hardy and a man of courage. Nothing is too laborious for him. . . . He dislikes dances, music, amorous talk, curiosities of dress and courtly trivialities, and has an especial detestation for earrings. His manners are rough and uncouth: he speaks, eats, dresses and plays like a boor, and is no better in the company of women. Is never still a moment, walks perpetually up and down the room, and his gait is sprawling and awkward. His voice is loud and his words sententious. He prefers hunting to all else, and will be six hours together on his horse, galloping. . . . His body is feeble but not delicate: a young old man. I

observe three unfavourable points only. He does not understand his own insignificance, is prodigiously conceited and underrates other princes, and irritates his subjects by his indiscreet and violent attachments. He is idle, careless, too easy and given to pleasure, especially the chase, when he leaves his affairs to Arran, Montrose and his secretary. One must excuse this in one so young, but I fear the habit may grow. I hinted so to him, but he said that whatever seemed, he knew all of consequence that was going on; that he could afford to hunt, for when he attended to business he could do more in an hour than others in a day. He could do five things at once; and the lords could attempt nothing without his knowledge. He had his spies at their chamber doors evening and morning, who brought him word of all they were about. He said he was his mother's son in many ways. His body was weak and he could not work long consecutively, but when he did work he was worth any other six put together. Sometimes he tried to force himself to his desk for a week at a time, but was always ill after. Like a Spanish gennet he could run one course well, but could not hold out. These are his own words."

Fontenay may have flattered the young King's intellect a little, but all are agreed that his understanding was good, and certainly none of his personal failings are here glossed over. His appearance and habits were not pleasing. Hunting was his great passion, and Scaliger says that "He was always merciful except at the chase, where he was cruel and very angry when he could not catch the stag: 'God,' he said, 'is enraged against me,' and when he caught him, he would put his arm entirely into the belly and entrails of the beast." His doctor, Sir Theodore Mayerne, who attended him for many years after he came to England, says that he was then of middle stature, moderately fat, with a thin beard, and large and rolling eyes. As a consequence of the neglect of his early years, his legs were weak, and his movements clumsy and shambling. His tongue was too large for his mouth, so he "drank unseemly" and coughed much. He had soft hands and

never washed them, but rubbed them sometimes with a damp cloth. He ate well and had a strong head for wine, but slept badly; was never sick at sea. He hated medicine, and would never take any till late in life: perhaps he feared poison, as he certainly did the dagger, for he always wore a thickly quilted doublet, which made him appear stouter than he really was. But he was very thrifty with his clothes, and wore them till they fell to rags; though his taste in colours was flamboyant. An unsympathetic witness of his first progress as King of England describes him as wearing garments "as greene as the grasse he trod on, with a feather on his cap, and a horne instead of a sword by his side, how suitable to his age, calling, or person I leave to others to judge from pictures." He was at this time thirty-seven. On the day of his accession a lioness whelped in the Tower, and when this was told him, he regarded it as a good omen and was vastly pleased.

In 1589 he had married Anne, younger sister of King Christian IV of Denmark, and had now three children living: Henry, aged ten; Elizabeth, seven; and Charles, two and a half. Bidding his family follow him as soon as convenient, James set out at once to take possession of his long-coveted new kingdom in the south. He travelled slowly, for, starting on the 5th April, he did not reach Whitehall till the 11th May; but by that time he had been entertained at almost every great house on the way, and every person of consequence in the kingdom had ridden out to meet him. Many are the anecdotes related of him during this journey, and almost all are rude and uncouth. The one amongst his new subjects whom he disliked most was Sir Walter Raleigh, almost the last left of the great Elizabethans; one who had never "trimmed" like Cecil, Bacon, Lord Henry Howard and most of the new politicians, who kept his old hate of Spain till his dying day, and could never adjust himself to mean compromises. Him James greeted with the atrocious pun, "Why mon, I hae heard but rawly o' thee," and so bade him and many others who had come out only to show loyalty to their new sovereign to "go

JAMES I.
by Paul van Somers

Photo, Emery Walker

home again unless they had special business with him"; since the great crowds pressing to see him made provisions dear in the country and would be bad for the people. A frugal monarch this: Elizabeth had never discouraged her loving lieges from gazing on her for any such scruple, and the more that came the better she was pleased. But James had to pay no bills himself on this progress, for he was lavishly entertained wherever he pleased to stay; and the great nobles of England vied with one another in the magnificence of the fare they provided for him. Gilbert, Earl of Shrewsbury, was honoured with a stay of one night at Worksop, where, well tutored in the King's tastes, he offered him first a chase after game in the park, and then "so nobly received him with superfluitie of all things, that still every entertainment seemed to exceed the other." James knighted thirteen of Gilbert's friends next morning, and the young Earl must have breathed more freely when he left; for although the night's lodging had landed him heavily in debt, he had been given to understand that he was regarded with favour, and till then there had been a certain amount of doubt how the new King meant to treat his cousin Arbella and her friends and kinsfolk.

To Arbella herself, waiting quietly at Wrest House, it seemed as though a curtain had suddenly been lifted and all her difficulties had rolled away. Cecil was able to put off the mask, and she realized that, though he had never striven to make her Queen and she would have thanked him little for it if he had, yet he was no such bitter foe as she had pictured him in those last cruel days at Hardwick. Indeed she little knew the difficulties with which, during all that time, he had had to contend, nor how much harder she, with her foolish mysteries, had made it for him to stand her unobtrusive friend; but all this was now explained to her. Early in May the secretary had her sent up to London from Wrest, and in a long and serious conversation with her, explained the exact position. He seems to have found her reasonable, and apparently no more was said about the secret love affair. Her relations with her aunt and uncle too, perhaps through the

intervention of Gilbert's daughter, her hostess at Wrest, returned once more and immediately to the old friendly footing.

Very soon after the new King was established at Whitehall, Cecil spoke to him of Arbella, and persuaded him to grant her an audience, at which the two cousins met for the first time. One gathers that Arbella was by far the more self-possessed of the two, for poor James was shy, ill at ease, and still doubtful of the real feelings of this graceful, finished Court lady; but Cecil had coached both in what they were to say, and the interview ran very much upon the lines he had laid down. After it James, evidently still a little nervous of her, told Cecil that he thought she had better go back to Wrest, at any rate for the present; but the diplomatic secretary, well aware that she would consider this tantamount to permanent banishment, suggested that it would be a graceful act for the King to appear at least to leave her the choice of a dwelling-place, and that he would see to it that she should choose to join the Marchioness of Northampton at Sheen. James's vanity was flattered when Cecil begged him to "deal more tenderly with her," and explained that "now she had spoken with his Majesty, if she had not given him satisfaction, she might conceive that she should never be able to give him satisfaction, and so it would redouble her grief and affliction of mind, wherewith she had been too long already tormented": adding also that he "feared she would not like to go to any place as commanded thereto, for so she might think that she were still under a kind of restraint." So the King agreed that she should go to Sheen, and thither she travelled straight from London. The Marchioness of Northampton, her guardian for the time being, was a Swedish lady, and had been the third wife of Thomas Parr, Marquis of Northampton, brother to Queen Katherine Parr. Her husband had died many years earlier, leaving no children, and the title was shortly after this bestowed upon Lord Henry Howard, one who had always set his face against Arbella's interests, and who lived to work real havoc in her affairs.

Since she was henceforth to be an independent lady, and no longer under the charge of the Shrewsburys, young or old, but to live—within limits—where she chose, it was important and in fact necessary that some income should now be settled upon Arbella. She had absolutely nothing but the tiny pittance from her little property at Smallwood, since the £200 a year allowed her since infancy lapsed with the Queen's death; and before she left town Cecil promised, though doubtfully, to get something arranged for her as soon as possible. Her claim, however, was not the only or the most pressing one to be dealt with at this time of clamorous demands from every quarter of two kingdoms; there were all the hungry Scots, and in particular the King's own favourites, eager to grab at some of the fat English lands; there was the new Court to arrange in preparation for the arrival of Queen Anne, already on her way from Scotland; all the Court officials to appoint, and their duties and salaries to settle; and so for some weeks Arbella's needs were overlooked. On the 14th June she wrote to remind Cecil of her wishes; and he, harassed, seems to have replied that the King could decide nothing for the present; for on the 22nd-23rd she writes again, assuring him that she "would rather make hard shift for the present than be too troublesome to His Highness," but begging that her "present wants may be supplied by some sum of money which need not be annual. . . . If I should name two thousand pounds for my present occasions it would not exceed my necessity, but I dare not presume to crave any certain sum." The whole tone of these letters is one of the most cordial respect; Arbella addressing Cecil as "My honourable good friend," and acknowledging herself "greatly bounden" to him. It seems that after all, however, Cecil managed her affair sooner than he had himself expected, for three days later she sent him her "humble thanks . . . for procuring and hastening the King's liberality towards" her, and on the 30th June acknowledges having "received his Majesty's liberality by your lordship's means"; and adds again her "thankfulness to you, whose good opinion

and favour I highly esteem." All these notes are very carefully written, but very short, although Arbella apologizes for trespassing on the secretary's "patience in reading these needless lines," a restraint for which Sir Henry Brounker would have been glad enough a few months earlier. But much had happened between March and June.

As in the following September a warrant was issued to pay the Lady Arbella £800 per annum, this is apparently the sum James proposed to settle upon her; but though a great advance on what she had received before, it did not long remain sufficient for her needs, nor did she gain possession of it for some time, and then only after repeated duns. A new, gay and very happy life now dawned for Arbella. Queen Anne and her children arrived at Windsor in the end of June, and the King's cousin seems almost immediately to have been sent for to meet them. Anne of Denmark was exactly the same age as Arbella; a foolish, amiable, empty-headed woman, but kindly enough when it suited her to be so, and she took at once a great liking for her new relative; and since her own little daughter Elizabeth was too young to remain in London and was sent away in October to the country, she insisted upon keeping Arbella constantly with her, and making of her both a personal friend and the first lady at her Court. James himself raised no objection, having now surmounted his shyness, and found nothing but goodwill towards himself in the breast of this terrible cousin, whose very existence had for so many years filled his soul with alarm. We therefore behold her lifted straight from the position of a troublesome child, scolded and scorned on every side, to that of the second greatest lady in England, a personage of much influence with the Queen and through her of the King, and one to be flattered and sought out by all. It has been insinuated that James feared his wife, and that she dominated him by her will; but, though often no doubt worried into consenting to her caprices, a very downright letter he wrote her not long after their marriage shows that he always meant to be master, and that the

sooner she understood it the more peace would reign between them. She had been boasting of her kingly birth, and complained that her husband treated her with too great familiarity, to which he tersely replied, "King's or cook's daughter, ye must be alike to me, being ance my wife." Apparently after this she submitted to the position with as good a grace as she might, at any rate in public; for we find Francis Osborne, in his *Traditional Memoirs*, describing James's departure for his first royal progress in England thus: "He that evening parted from his Queene, and to show himselfe more uxorious before the people at his first coming than in private he was, he did at her coach side take his leave, by kissing her sufficiently to the middle of her shoulders, for so low she went bare all the dayes I had the fortune to know her, having a skinne far more amiable than the features it covered, though not the disposition, in which report rendered her very debonnaire."

A MS. life of Elizabeth of Bohemia, lavishly quoted by both Miss Strickland and Miss Cooper, declares that Arbella went as far as Welbeck, the residence of her uncle, Charles Cavendish, to meet the Queen on her way into England; and that she first encountered her on a hill by the roadside, where, dressed as Diana, she led a Masque of maidens, and in poetic numbers requested her Majesty to repose herself in their sylvan retreat. The impossibility of this romance is demonstrated by the dates of Arbella's own letters to Cecil, all of which are written from Sheen; while the story, on the same authority, that she was at once appointed State Governess to little Princess Elizabeth seems equally untrustworthy, and is nowhere else corroborated. The child's State Governess was already the Countess of Kildare; but there is little doubt that Arbella, who hitherto had never had much to do with children, became an instant favourite with these young cousins, and loved almost as much to be with them as they with her. It was, indeed, the first time in her life that she had been admitted into a big family on equal terms and actually as one of themselves; for at

the Shrewburys she had been treated always as half prisoner and half princess. Little Prince Henry conceived a great admiration for his grown-up cousin. He was a handsome charming boy, already much resembling his good-looking grandfather, Henry Darnley, and so far he was to the English by far the most popular member of their new royal family. Poor little "Baby Charles," the tragic "White King" of the future, was exceedingly delicate, and so particularly weak in the ankle-joints that it was feared, even if he grew up, he would never be able to walk. No lady of the Court would undertake the responsibility of his upbringing, till at last Lady Carey consented to do so, and with infinite care and solicitude made a healthy youth of him.

Two days after the Queen's arrival, James held an Investiture of the Knights of the Garter, at which his son Henry, the Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Mar, Lord Southampton and the Earl of Pembroke were all admitted to the most noble Order. The Queen, who hated the Earl of Mar, had a fit of temper and refused to be present; and tradition has it that to the Lady Arbella, therefore, fell the duty of chaperoning little Princess Elizabeth, and that the two royal princesses stood together in a recess in one of the windows at St. George's Hall to watch the ceremony. This may very well have been true. Afterwards Queen Anne had recovered her equanimity, and held a great reception at Windsor, at which Arbella and her aunt Mary were conspicuous for their "most sumptuous dresses and exceeding rich and glorious jewels." It must have been a brilliant sight, for James would allow no mourning to be worn for the late Queen Elizabeth; an ungracious trait in him, which greatly scandalized the ambassadors from foreign countries, who arriving in sombre garments to present their condolences, were bidden put these off at once and make merry with the rest. On the 24th July the King and Queen were crowned, "it being then very bad weather and the pestilence mightily raging"; and on this occasion Queen Anne, having already begun that "dalliance with Rome," which all her life

caused her husband such intense annoyance, refused to communicate according to the Reformed Church. The incident caused much talk; and all her life long her people were never quite sure whether Anne of Denmark were a secret Catholic or not. One of her bedchamber ladies, named Drummond, was a strong Papist and had a great influence with the Queen: it is only surprising that James permitted her to retain her post till her marriage ten years later. But Anne meant to choose her own friends, and did so, not always too judiciously; Lady Anne Clifford, one of them, remarks that the Queen "shewed no favoure to the elderly Ladies, but to my Lady Rich and such like companie." Anne Clifford herself was the daughter of the Earl of Cumberland, and only fourteen at this time: later she became successively Countess of Dorset, Pembroke and Montgomery. Another favourite of the new Queen's was Lucy, Countess of Bedford, the friend of Jonson, Donne and Daniel.

After these first festivities, Arbella went home with her uncle and aunt for a short stay in the country, during which there was no doubt much to explain and re-adjust; but all three soon after rejoined the Court, which in consequence of a plague scare, had now removed to Farnham. Earl Gilbert could not yet feel satisfied of his niece's discretion when left entirely on her own responsibility amongst these new relations; and indeed his fears, taking into account her recent behaviour, were by no means surprising. Having himself been newly appointed Lord Justice in Eyre, north of the Trent, he was obliged to travel thither in August, accompanied by his wife; but he not only spoke seriously to Arbella, but gave her also a letter of introduction to the Lord Chamberlain, and begged him and her friend Sir William Stewart to watch her affairs and conduct, advise her if necessary, and report all that happened to himself. Gilbert need have had no anxiety however. Happiness was the making of Arbella, and she blossomed in it, for the first time in her life was able to act naturally, and became at once younger than she had ever been in her real youth. But

she wrote him a grateful little note signed "Your disciple," from Farnham on the 14th August, in which she thanks him "for letting me understand your course, which though it bend directly northward, will not hinder you from thinking and looking to the south, where you leave me to take my fortune in an unknown climate, without either art or instruction, but what I have from you, whose skilful directions I will observe as far forth as they are Puritan like. And though I be very frail, I must confess, you shall see in me the good effects of your prayer and your great glory for reforming my untowardly resolutions and mirth." From this we gather that it was high spirits now and not low from which her uncle feared her undoing.

Henceforth, whenever parted from her uncle and aunt, Arbella maintained a regular weekly correspondence with them, from which much valuable information of the early days of James I's Court may be obtained. The Court did not remain long at Farnham, for on the 23rd August she wrote from Basing, begging the Earl to use his influence with Cecil to obtain her not only the promised pension, which had not yet reached her, but also an allowance for "diet" such as was made to all great persons at the Court, and which consisted of a stated number of dishes every day for herself and her household. This letter was accompanied by a more intimate one to her aunt, explaining that the King wished her to have the diet, but Cecil and Lord Henry Howard had "crossed her intent." "I think that makes others deny me that the King granted, and makes even himself think anything enough, when the wise counsellors think it too much." She speaks warmly of James, however: "You know his inclination to be kind to all his kin and liberal to all below him, and you know his protestations of extraordinary affection to me. Therefore I am sure it is evil counsel that withholds him so long from doing for me in as liberal sort, or more, as he hath done for any." And for the Queen, "When she speaks of you, she speaks very kindly and honourably of you." But she already seems a little disdainful of the behaviour

of the Court ladies who had so lately flattered and fawned upon the dead Elizabeth, and now "Our great and gracious ladies leave no gesture or fault of the late Queen unremembered, as they say who are partakers of their talk, as I thank God I am not. . . . I pray you let me hear of my faults from you when you will have me mend them, for I am sure you shall hear of them there, and I have neither those faults which are thought so here, nor those qualities good that are thought most gracious here. Now you are a bystander, you may guide and direct better than ever." She sends her love to her uncle Charles and his wife and all her cousins, mentions that "Mr. Elphinstone is my very good friend and yours much devoted," and that "Sir William Stuart commendeth himself to you and my uncle."

The Court moved to Woodstock next, and from here Stuart wrote himself to Gilbert early in September that the King was "wonderfully well disposed" to grant his cousin's wishes, "seeing thereby one singularly well affected to him and his by the well-doing of that good turn as appertains," and begged him also to "continue in writing from time to time your wise and loving opinion to my lady, your honour's most tender and dearest niece, who I doubt not in time, with wisdom, patience and good government, shall both be blessed of God and win her process. For although her virtue and knowledge has been envied of to me, yet her ladyship has acquired many favourers, and sundry well-affected to her honour and good merits and good behaviour." As already noted, the pension was actually paid a few days after this, and a "mess of meat" from the King's table granted, followed later by an acceptable little "free gift" of £660 for her immediate needs. On the 17th September Cecil wrote to Lord Shrewsbury, "How my Lady Arbella is now satisfied I know not, but the King hath granted £800 yearly for her maintainance, and of it £200 beforehand, and she shall also have dishes of meat for her household"; while Arbella herself wrote the day before to her aunt, giving her this news in high good humour, though adding, "And my

Lord Cecil will despatch it, I trust, with all speed, for so his lordship promiseth."

Earl Gilbert seems to have thought too constant a correspondence with his niece unwise, for she apologizes for sending him "one superfluous letter more"; but at the same time assures her aunt that "You shall not fail to receive weekly letters, God willing, unless lack of health, or means, or some very great occasion hinder me." This letter is dated from Oxford, meaning Woodstock, but "The Queen is going hence to-morrow": and only this careless allusion does Arbella make to the terrible plague which that year swept over England and caused the Court to forsake London during summer and autumn, and wander from place to place, scarcely daring to spend more than a week in the same quarters. Over 3000 Londoners died in a week from this fearful disease, and since infection was one of James's many fears, he insisted on constant changes, making of the Court a veritable "camp volant, which every week dislodgeth." The dilapidated old palace at Woodstock, untenanted since Elizabeth had been a prisoner there during her sister's reign nearly fifty years before, suited James well enough; for there was good hunting to be had near, and, being accustomed to somewhat rough accommodation himself, he took the best there was, and saw nothing to complain of; but the fine ladies and courtiers of England were bitterly disgusted at being obliged to make do with damp rooms, broken windows, and worn-out furniture, while some, not so fortunate even as this, had to live in tents on the wet grass. The weather was atrocious that year, and the rain continual. Cecil's description of their plight speaks volumes: "The place is unwholesome, all the house standing upon springs. It is unsavoury, for there is no savour but of cows and pigs. It is uneaseful, for only the King and Queen, with the privy chamber ladies, and some three or four of the Scottish Council, are lodged in the house; and neither Chamberlain, nor one English Councillor, have a room, which will be a sour sauce to some of your old friends that have been merry with you in a winter's

night, from whence they have not removed to their bed in a snow-storm." Not so were the ministers of the great Elizabeth treated.

Arbella's "one superfluous letter more" to her uncle is so full of Court gossip, and in spite of the half sarcastic way in which she writes it, so clearly shows her own new gaiety and amusement in the frivolous life that it may well be quoted entire. Queen Anne it will be observed still seems to her the only one of the new *régime* from whom any true dignity or courtesy was to be expected, and of her she always speaks in friendly and respectful terms. The Lord Admiral mentioned here was the Earl of Nottingham, better known by his earlier title of Lord Howard of Effingham, the hero of the Armada. The death of his wife, the Countess of Nottingham, will be remembered as one of the incidents thought to be contributory to the final breakdown of her old friend Queen Elizabeth, whether or no any truth lay in the story of the Essex ring : but Nottingham himself was no longer inconsolable, and was now, at the age of sixty-eight, shortly to be married to Lady Margaret Stuart, a young kinswoman of Arbella's own. His daughter the Countess of Kildare, hitherto State Governess to Princess Elizabeth, had lately taken a second husband in Lord Cobham, who was already looked upon with suspicion at Court. "The Dutchkin" is Duke Ulric of Holstein, on a visit to his sister Queen Anne; Taxis was the Spanish Ambassador, and Count Aremberg the Austrian Ambassador.

"At my return from Oxford," writes Arbella to her uncle; "where I have spent this day, whilst my Lord Cecil amongst many more weighty affairs was dispatching some of mine, I found my Cousin Lacy had disburdened himself at my chamber of the charge he had from you, and straight fell to prepare his fraught back, for hindering his back return to-morrow morning as he intendeth.

"I writ to tell you of the reason of the delay of Taxis' audience; it remaineth to tell how jovially he behaveth himself in the interim. He hath brought great store of Spanish gloves, hawk's hoods, leather for jerkins, and,

moreover, a perfumer; these delicacies he bestoweth among our ladies and lords, I will not say with a hope to effeminate the one sex, but certainly with a hope to grow gracious with the other, as he already is. The curiosity of our sex drew many ladies and gentlewomen to gaze at him betwixt his landing-place and Oxford, his abiding-place; which he, desirous to satisfy (I will not say nourish that vice), made his coach stay, and took occasion, with petty gifts and courtesies, to win soon-won affections, who, comparing his manner with Monsieur de Rosney's, hold him their far welcomer guest. At Oxford he took some distaste about his lodging, and would needs lodge at an inn, because he had not all Christ's College to himself, and was not received into the town by the Vice-Chancellor *in pontificalibus*, which they never used to do but to the King or Queen or Chancellor of the University as they say; but those scruples were soon digested, and he vouchsafeth to lodge in a piece of the College till his repair to the King at Winchester. Count Aremberg was here within these few days, and presented to the Queen the Archduke's and the Infanta's pictures excellently drawn. Yesterday the King and Queen dined at a lodge of Sir Henry Lee's, three miles hence, and were accompanied by the French Ambassador and a Dutch Duke. I will not say we were merry at the Dutchkin, lest you complain of me for telling tales out of the Queen's coach; but I could find it in my heart to write unto you some of our yesterday's adventures, but that it groweth late, and by the shortness of your letter, I conjecture you would not have this honest gentleman overladen with such superfluous relations.

“My Lord Admiral is returned from the Prince and Princess, and either is or will be my cousin before incredulous you will believe such incongruities in a counsellor, as love maketh no miracle in his subjects, of what degree or age whatsoever. His daughter of Kildare is discharged of her office, and as near a free woman as may be, and have a bad husband. The Dutch Lady my Lord Wotton spoke of at Basing proved a lady sent by the Duchess

of Holstein to learn the English fashions. She lodgeth at Oxford, and hath been here twice, and thinketh every day long till she be at home, so well she liketh her entertainment, or loveth her own country; in truth, she is civil, and therefore cannot but look for the like which she brings out of a ruder country. But if ever there were such a virtue as courtesy at the Court, I marvel what is become of it, for I protest I see little or none of it but in the Queen, who, ever since her coming to Newbury, hath spoken to the people as she passeth, and receiveth their prayers with thanks, and thankful countenance, barefaced, to the great contentment of native and foreign people; for I would not have you think the French Ambassador would leave that attractive virtue of our late Queen Elizabeth unremembered or uncommended, when he saw it imitated by our most gracious Queen, lest you should think we infect even our neighbours with incivility. But what a theme have rude I gotten unawares! It is your own virtue I commend by the foil of the contrary vice; and so, thinking on you, my pen accused myself before I was aware. Therefore I will put it to silence for this time, only adding a short but most hearty prayer for your prosperity in all kinds, and so humbly take my leave.

“ From Woodstock this 15th September,

“ Your lordship’s niece, Arbella Stuart.”

CHAPTER X

FORTUNE'S WHEEL (1603-4)

IT was fortunate indeed for Arbella that the new King and Queen had taken so instant a liking for her, and made of her so personal a friend. Otherwise the Main and Bye Plots, which this autumn involved so many great English names in disaster, must and almost certainly would have caught her too in their toils. The Bye Plot was first spoken of as early as July; the Main or Spanish Treason not till September, but it is difficult, without entering into an elaboration of detail, to explain all the ramifications of either. The last at least had for its object the old scheme, to carry Arbella abroad, marry her to some Catholic prince, and set her up as an opposition sovereign to James; but so many hundred times had this been discussed with no tangible result that had it not been for a strong undercurrent of discontent among the English nobles of the day, many of whom were whispered of as being amongst the conspirators, it is probable that no further notice would have been taken of it.

Lord Cobham and his brother Lord George Brooke were held to be the chief culprits, together with Lord Grey of Wilton and Sir Griffin Markham: but Cobham was also the intimate friend of Sir Walter Raleigh, and if he could only be persuaded to implicate Raleigh in the treason, it would make matters very easy for James to have the latter put out of the way. The King bore a strange hatred to this man, for which it is altogether difficult to account. It is true James desired peace with Spain, and Spain would not even parley till Sir Walter, her most inveterate enemy, were muzzled, disgraced, dead, or imprisoned for life, but this very attitude of hers showed the absurdity of supposing

Raleigh guilty of any share in a plot for which the co-operation of Spain was a necessity. Nevertheless, Raleigh, from whom all his great posts had already been stripped, must now be utterly ruined; and Cobham was imprisoned in the Tower, and given to understand that his only hope of pardon lay in accusing his friend. A coward at heart, the prisoner stooped even to this baseness. Raleigh, also sent to the Tower, found means to correspond with him, and adjured him "for the love of God, his wife and children, to tell the truth in writing so it could be read in court." Cobham, unstrung and yet desirous of showing courage, replied with this paper: "To clear my conscience, satisfy the world, and free myself from the cry of your blood, I protest upon my soul and before God and His angels, I never had conference with you in any treason: nor was ever moved by you to the thing I heretofore accused you of. . . . And so God deal with me, and have mercy on my soul as this is true." When this paper was produced at the trial, however, Cobham's heart failed him again, and he declared it false, and said it had been got from him by artifice. On which Raleigh commented aloud, "Now I wonder how many souls this man hath; he damns one in this letter, another in that!"

There seems unfortunately little doubt that Cecil busied himself to procure forged letters and faked evidence against Raleigh in order to please the King, and he even set about a report that the prisoner had attempted to commit suicide while in the Tower, a fact which, if true, would have told blackly against his innocence. But Raleigh was not the man to bungle an affair of that sort; he knew a hundred ways to die if he had wished, and he kept a stout heart and a valiant spirit yet. The trial began at Winchester on the 17th November, the King being then established in that city; and all the Court flocked to witness it in order to titillate their frivolous minds with the spicy excitements of death and terror. To Arbella the excitement can have been scarcely pleasing; her name was too closely mixed in all these tragic happenings, and though she herself was entirely cleared of all complicity

in the plot, it must have been with strange emotions that she sat in a gallery with the Earl of Nottingham and listened to all that passed at the Trial. Cobham still declared that she had sought his friendship, but that his sole object in desiring an interview with her was to warn her that, "there were some about the King that laboured to disgrace her": while his brother Brooke, a man and a gentleman, stated that he "never did move her as his brother desired."

It was not easy to sift this evidence with due respect to the lady listening, and Arbella's name was dragged rudely forward at times. On one occasion, "My lord Admiral, the Earl of Nottingham, by whom she sat, rose in his gallery, and declared 'The lady here doth protest upon her salvation that she never dealt in any of these things, and so she willed me to tell the Court'"; while Sir Robert Cecil, a useful partisan, stated: "Here hath been a touch of the Lady Arbella Stuart, the King's nearest kinswoman. Let us not scandal the innocent by confusion of speech. She is as innocent of all these things as I or any man here; only she received a letter from my Lord Cobham to prepare her, which she laughed at, and immediately sent it to the King." Cecil's own wife, Elizabeth Brooke, was Cobham's sister, while the Admiral's daughter, Lady Kildare, had lately become Cobham's wife; so that both Arbella's apologists were somewhat closely connected with the chief culprit. One Michael Hickes, writing to Earl Gilbert a few days later of the trial, says; "They say the La Arbella's name came to be mentioned in the evidence; but she was cleared in the opinion of all; and as I heard my Ld Cecil spoke very honourably in her behalf, but one that gave in evydence it is said spake very grossly and rudely concerning her La as I think yr Lordship hath hard or shall heare." Much of this evidence however was suppressed.

Kingsley has stated that "But one thing comes clearly out of the infinite confusion and mystery of this dark Cobham plot, and that is Raleigh's innocence." His Arraignment constituted indeed the great day of the Trial. The prosecution was conducted by Attorney-General Sir

Edward Coke with his customary brutality. He was assisted by Serjeant Hale, by whom the indictment was read, to the effect that Raleigh “had conference with Lord Cobham how to advance Arbella Steward to the Crowne and Royall Throne of this Kingdome; and that then and there it was agreed: that Cobham should treat with Aremberge, Ambassador from the Archduke of Austria, to obtain of him six hundred thousand crowns to bring to passe the intended Treasons: It was agreed that Cobham should go to Albert the Archduke, to procure him to advance the pretended title of Arbella; from thence, knowing that Albert had not sufficient meanes to maintaine his owne army in the Lowcountrys, Cobham should go into Spaine to procure the King to assist and further her pretended Title. It was also agreed the better to effect all these conspiracies, that Arbella should write three Letters, one to the Archduke, another to the King of Spain, and another to the Duke of Savoy, promising three things, first to establish firme Peace between England and Spain, secondly to tolerate the Romish and Popish Superstition; thirdly to be ruled by them for the contriving of her Marriage and for effecting of these trayterous purposes. . . . And after on the Thursday following Cobham and his brother Brook did trayterously speak these words That there would never be a good world in England till the King and his cubs (meaning his Royal Issue) were taken away . . . and on the 11th June for the accomplishment of the said conference and by the trayterous instigations of Raleigh, Cobham did move Brook to incite Arbella to write the three foresaid letters to procure them to advance her Title, and that she, after she had obtained the Crowne, should perform these three things.”

“Master Serjeant Hale opened the matter, and delivered the effect of the indictment: In whose Speech this was observed, that he charged Sir Walter to have intended the Intitling of the Lady Arbella Steward to the Crown, who he said had no more title thereunto than he had himself: and further said after a little pause, that hee for his owne part did disclaim and renounce all part thereunto, whereat

Sir Walter Raleigh smiled." Such an unguarded speech might indeed, under many circumstances have been sufficient to bring a man to the block. Cobham's confession was then read over to the prisoner, who was not, however, permitted to confront him in person. This was a very real injustice, and Raleigh protested strongly against it, but in vain. He then conducted his own defence and did it in as splendid fashion as all else he undertook; from the dry pages of the book where the legal process is set down, his speech leaps out as with a living fire. "Prove these practices by one witness," he cried; "and I will confess myself guilty to the King in a thousand treasons. I stand not upon the Law, I defy the Law, if I have done these things I desire not to live, whether they be treasonable by law or no. Let me have my accuser brought to my face, and if he will maintaine it to my face I will confess my judgment. . . . What pawne had we to give the King of Spain? What did we offer him? Or how could we invent to offer him the letter of an Arbella, whom he could not chuse but know to be of no following: what a mockery is this! What would I make myselfe? A Cade? A Kett? A Jack Straw?"

Raleigh spoke at great length, but seems to have thought little of Arbella, whom later he mentioned as "a woman with whom he had no acquaintance, and one whom of all that he saw he never liked." He finally dismissed Cobham in contempt as "a poor silly base dishonourable soul"; and was in his turn variously apostrophized by the Attorney-General as "Monster, viper, spider of hell, detestable atheist, rankest traitor in all England": but mere invective counted for very little to the listeners, and it is safe to say that Raleigh was never more adored in England than at the close of the Trial which condemned him to death. Dudley Carleton, who was present, declared that when the Trial opened he would have gone a hundred miles to see Raleigh hanged, but ere its close a thousand to save his life. Chief Justice Gandy, one of the Judges of the Court, said long after, on his deathbed, that there were scenes at that Trial which degraded for ever the character

of English justice. But the King required a verdict of death, and it was pronounced on all the prisoners.

Only Brooke suffered. James conceived a plan of punishing the others which he thought crafty and dramatic, but which was really dictated by nothing but a clumsy brutality. Each separately was brought upon the scaffold, and at the last moment granted a reprieve, having thus tasted all the bitterness of death without its peace. After this they were all sent back to London, to pass weary months, and perhaps years, within the gloomy walls of the Tower. The Countess of Kildare, the Princess Elizabeth's governess, having been married to Lord Cobham just before the discovery of the conspiracy, was obliged to resign her post, which was given to Lady Harington.

The Court seems thoroughly to have enjoyed all these stimulating sights in the intervals of playing childish games and inventing spiteful gossip. In spite of her gratitude for the kindness of her new relations, Arbella could not help quickly tiring of their incredibly foolish amusements, nor could she approve the tone of much which passed at the Court. It did not seem to her yet openly vicious, but the Queen was silly and the King coarse, and their followers indulged in much rowdy horse-play which to those accustomed to the stately manners of the Tudor Queen was intensely distasteful. "Whilst we were at Winchester," she writes to her uncle; "there were certain child-plays remembered by the fair ladies, viz.: 'I pray, my lord, give me a course in your park'; 'Rise, pig, and go'; 'One penny, follow me,' etc. And when I came to Court, they were as highly in request as ever cracking of nuts was. So I was by the mistress of the revels, not only compelled to play at I knew not what (for till that day I never heard of a play called 'Fire'), but even persuaded by the princely example I saw to play the child again. This exercise is most used from ten of the clock at night till two or three in the morning, but that day I made one it began at twilight and ended at supper-time." Little Anne Clifford, writing of the great Masque held at Winchester, tells that "All the ladies about the Court had

gotten such ill names that it had grown a scandalous place, and the Queen herself was much fallen from her former greatness and reputation she had in the world."

His undoubted erudition did not help James to surround himself with learned or brilliant intellects, and indeed he rather preferred to be himself the best of his company. Arbella came quickly to be looked upon as something of a blue-stocking, and though her studious habits won her the admiration of some, many rather resented her custom of shutting herself up to read for stated hours every day, and insisted on dragging her out by force to share their fooleries. A rather harassed note to her aunt of the 6th October, pictures her feelings clearly enough. "Madame, —According to your commandment, I send your ladyship a few scribbled lines, though I be now going in great haste to give my attendance with some company that is come to fetch me. I am as diligently expected and as soon missed as they that perform the most acceptable service. And because I must return at an appointed time to go to my book, I must make the more haste thither. So praying for your happiness, I humbly take my leave." A hundred years ago Dr. Nathaniel Johnston speaks of having seen a Hebrew Bible in an embroidered cover, which belonged to Arbella and which she always used at church; and this was not the only dead tongue in perusing which she found pleasure and distraction. Constant reading strained her eyes, however, and the trouble served as an excuse to her aunt's reproaches for not writing oftener. "My bad eyes crave truce till they may without their danger write a letter of a larger volume," she pleads; and again in November, "I dare not, for incurring your opinion of my relapse into some unkindness toward you, but send you a few lines. I will keep a note of the dates of my letters. . . . My eyes are extremely swollen, and yet I have not spared them when I have had occasion to employ them for your sake. Therefore now they may boldly crave a cessation for this time, only performing their office whilst I subscribe myself such as I am and ever will continue, that is your ladyship's niece to command, Arbella Stuart."

With whatever doubts we may regard the attitude of the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury to their niece during those black days at Hardwick, it is probable that their action in thus cutting off communication with her was intended for her good; for there was now no longer any question of crowning her Queen, yet their interest in her welfare remained constant and sincere. In addition to Arbella's own letters, the Earl had several correspondents at Court from whom he received news of her and her doings; and of these one and all mention her with respect and admiration. Amongst her chief admirers was Sir William Fowler, Secretary and Master of Requests to the Queen, who may be remembered as the son of that Thomas Fowler, in whose charge Margaret of Lennox had left the jewels she wished her grandchild to inherit when she came of age. Thomas joined the Scottish Court after the old Countess' death, and died himself just before he should have delivered the jewels to Arbella; but since they had long since been stolen from him, it fell to his son William to deal with the matter as he best might. We never learn that Arbella received them, though no blame for this attaches to William, who worked his hardest on her behalf, and now in the train of the Scots' Queen came to England, and became personally acquainted with the lady he had thus appeared to defraud. A quaint, pedantic, ridiculous creature, this Fowler, who promptly fell head over ears in humble love with her, and wrote long effusions to Earl Gilbert, praising both her personal beauty and the qualities of her character. "I fear I am too saucy and overbold to trouble your honours," runs his first letter from Woodstock in September; "yet I cannot forbear from giving you advertisement of my great and good fortune in obtaining the acquaintance of my Lady Arbella, who may be to the first seven, justly the eighth wonder of the world. If I durst I would write more plainly my opinion of things that fall out here among us, but I dare not without your lordship's warrant deal so. I send two sonnets unto my most virtuous and honourable lady, the expressers of my humour and the honour of her whose

sufficiency and perfections merit more regard than this ungrateful and depressing age will afford or suffer." Later he tells the Earl that she always goes apart every day for a certain time for "lecture, reading, hearing of service and preaching, besides visiting the princesses"; and also that she is "more fairer than fair, more beautiful than beauteous, truer than truth itself." A few lines from one of his sonnets will show their rather high-flown style, but there is no reason to suppose them dictated by anything but a genuine sentiment of admiration.

"Thou godly nymph, possess with heavenly fear,
 Divine in soul, devout in life, and grave,
 Rapt from thy sense and sex, thy spirits doth steer
 Toys to avoid which reason doth bereave.
 O graces rare! which time from shame shall save,
 Wherein thou breath'st (as in the seas doth fish,
 In salt not saltish) exempt from the grave,
 Of sad remorse, the lot of worldlings wish.
 O ornament both of thyself and sex,
 And mirror bright where virtues doth reflex!"

Sir William Stewart wrote to Gilbert about the same time: "I find my Lady Arbella both considerate and wise"; and there seems little doubt that the scenes at the Winchester Trials sobered and saddened her very deeply, even though her alone of all the Court. She was, however, more nearly concerned in the matter tried, and had besides an additional anxiety in the fact that her uncle Henry Cavendish had been ordered, perhaps in consequence of his attempt to carry her off from Hardwick not many months before, to attend the Trial in case he might be found to be involved in the plot. His name was not mentioned, however, and at the close of the proceedings he was safely dismissed. From Winchester the Court moved to Foulston in Kent, and here Arbella seems to have been very unwell. To her uncle she writes a few lines to "return your lordship humble thanks for the letter I have received from you, and reserve the answer till I trust a few days will make me able to write without extreme pain of my head. Mr. Cooke can tell your lordship all the news that is here." Her aunt, too, who had sent her some simple remedies, is thanked for "your letters, pills, and

hartshorn. I have taken, continued, and increased an extreme cold. I mean to sweat to-day for it. Mr. Cooke can tell you how the world goes here." These notes are dated the 28th November, and ten days later she writes again from the same place at greater length and in better spirits. When she chose Arbella could write charming letters, gay and thoughtful by turns, but it is noticeable that she sends all the lightest gossip to the Earl, and keeps any more serious matters for her aunt. Gilbert seems to have been alarmed at some of the tales he had heard concerning the Court ladies, for after a few opening sentences she breaks forth: "I pray you take not that *pro concessio* in general, which is only proper to some monsters of our sex. I cannot deny so apparent a truth as that wickedness prevaieth with some of our sex, because I daily see some, even of the fairest among us, misled, and willingly and wittingly ensnared by the prince of darkness. But yet ours shall still be the purer and more innocent kind. There went ten thousand virgins to heaven in one day. Look but in the almanac, and you shall find that glorious day. And if you think there are some, but not many, of us that shall prove saints, I hope you are deceived. But *not many rich, not many noble, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* So that riches and nobility are hindrances from heaven, as well as our nature's infirmity. You would think me very full of divinity, or desirous to show that little I have, in both which you should do me wrong, if you knew what business I have at Court, and yet preach to you. Pardon me, it is not my function. Now a little more to the purpose.

"I have delivered your two patents, signed and sealed, to Mr. Hercy. If it be not an inexcusable presumption in me to tell you my mind unasked, as if I would advise you what to do, pardon me if I tell you I think your thanks will come very unseasonably so near New Year's-tide, especially those with which you send any gratuity. Therefore consider if it were not better to give your New Year's *gift* first to the Queen, and your *thanks* after, and keep Mr. Fowler's till after that good time. New Year's-tide will

come every year, and be a yearly tribute to them you begin with. You may impute the slowness of your thankfulness to Mr. Hercy, or me that acquainted you no sooner with your own matter.

“The Spanish Ambassador invited Mdme. de Beaumont (the French Ambassador’s lady) to dinner, requesting her to bring some English ladies with her. She brought my Lady Bedford, Lady Rich, Lady Susan, and Lady Dorothy with her, and great cheer they had. A fortnight after he invited the Duke (of Lennox), the Earl of Mar, and divers of that nation, requesting them to bring the Scottish ladies, for he was desirous to see some natural beauties. My Lady Anne Hay and my cousin Drummond went, and, after the sumptuous dinner, were presented first with a pair of Spanish gloves apiece, and after my cousin Drummond had a diamond ring of the value of two hundred crowns given her, and my Lady Anne a gold chain of Spanish work near that value. My Lady Carey went with them, and had gloves there, and after a gold chain of little links twice about her neck sent her.

“Yesterday the Spanish Ambassador, the Florentine, and Mdme. de Beaumont took their leave of the Queen till she come to Hampton Court. There is an ambassador come from Polonia, and fain would he be gone again, because of the freezing of their seas, but he hath not yet had audience. The Venetians lately sent two Ambassadors with letters both to the King and Queen. One of them is returned with a very honourable despatch; but he, staying but few days, and the Queen not being well, he saw her not. The other stays here still. It is said the Turk hath sent a Chahu to the King. It is said the Pope will send a knight to the King in embassy. The Duke of Savoy’s embassy is daily expected . . . a confusion of embassages.”

In her letter to the Countess of Shrewsbury, Arbella seems to make some allusion to the Winchester Trials, when she says: “How defective soever my memory be in other ways, assure yourself I cannot forget even small matters concerning that great party, much less such great ones as, I thank God, I was acquainted withal. Therefore,

when any great matter comes in question, rest secure, I beseech you, that I am not interested in it as an actor, howsoever the vanity of wicked men's vain designs have made my name pass through a gross and a subtle lawyer's lips of late, to the exercise and increase of my patience, and not their credit. I trust I have not lost so much of your good opinion as your pleasant postscript would make one that were suspicious of their assured friends (as I never was) believe. For if I should not prefer the reading of your kind and most welcome letters before all Court delights (admit I delighted as much in them as others do), it were a sign of extreme folly; and liking Court sports no better than I do, and than I think, you think I do, I know you cannot think me so transformed as to esteem anything less than them. As your love and judgment together makes me hope you know I can like nor love anything better than the love and kindness of so honourable friends as you and my uncle. Wherefore I beseech you let me hear often of your love by the length and number of your letters. My own follies and ignorances will furnish you sufficient matter for as many and as long letters as you please, which, I beseech you, may be as many and as copious as may be without your trouble."

One can scarcely doubt Arbella's affection for her aunt thus warmly declared, and again in the signature of "Your ladyship's most affectionate niece to command"; but the chief question upon which they now desired to consult one another was the difficult one of New Year's gifts for the King and Queen. These had been a great tax in Elizabeth's time, but the expense was now doubled, and it was not easy to know what might please the newcomers' taste. Already, in November, Arbella had written to her aunt, "I humbly thank you for your good advice against New Year's-tide. I think there will be no remedy but I must provide myself from London, though I be very loth to do so": and she now seems to have discussed the subject with one of the Queen's own ladies, whose suggestion she thus sends on: "I have satisfied the honourable gentlewoman without raising any expectation in her to

receive letters from you, which is a favour I desire only may be reserved still for myself, my good Lord Cecil, and your best esteemed friends. I asked her advice for a New Year's gift for the Queen, both for myself, who am altogether unprovided, and a great lady, a friend of mine, that was in my case for that matter; and her answer was, that the Queen regarded not the value, but the device. The gentlewoman neither liked gown nor petticoat so well as some little bunch of rubies to hang in her ear, or some such daft toy. I mean to give Her Majesty two pair of silk stockings lined with plush, and two pair of gloves lined, if London afford me not some daft toy I like better, whereof I cannot bethink me. If I knew the value you would bestow, I think it were no hard matter to get her or Mrs. Hartshide to understand the Queen's mind without knowing who asked it. The time is short, and therefore you had need lose none of it. I am making the King a purse, and for all the world else I am unprovided. This time will manifest my poverty more than all the rest of the year. But why should I be ashamed of it when it is other's fault, and not mine? My quarter's allowance will not defray this one charge, I believe."

The £800 a year it seems was not likely to go far, and Arbella already found the expenses of Court life and of maintaining a household of her own considerably greater than she had anticipated. As Christmas approached, it became evident that the King and Queen meant to make a right merry festival of it, and Arbella paints a lively picture for her uncle of all the preparations. The Queen and her ladies arrived at Hampton Court on the 16th December; and two days later she writes: "I dare not write unto you how I do, for if I should say well, I were greatly to blame; if ill, I trust you would not believe me, I am so merry. It is enough to change Heraclitus into Democritus to live in this most ridiculous world, and enough to change Democritus into Heraclitus to live in this most wicked world. If you will not allow reading of riddles for a Christmas sport, I know not whether you will take this philosophical folly of mine in good part this good time. I write to your lordship, by a messenger of Mr.

Hercy's, an answer of yours I received by my cousin Lacy's man, of such news as then were news, as I think in the North, and now have I none to send but that the King will be here to-morrow. The Polonian ambassador shall have audience on Thursday next. The Queen intendeth to make a mask this Christmas, to which end My Lady of Suffolk and my Lady Walsingham have warrants to take of the late Queen's best apparel out of the Tower at their discretion. Certain noblemen (whom I may not yet name to you, because some of them hath made me of their counsel) intend another; certain gentlemen of good sort another. It is said there shall be thirty plays. The King will feast all the Ambassadors this Christmas. Sir John Hollis yesterday convoyed some new-come Ambassador to Richmond, and it was said, but uncertainly, to be a Muscovian . . . I humbly thank you for your letter to my Lord Bishop of Winchester, which, if it be written (as I doubt not but it is) in that sort as may avail the recommended, is worth ten favours of greater value than you had been willing to grant."

The Shrewsburys had sent her some venison from Sheffield as a present, which she says, "shall be right welcome to Hampton Court, and merrily eaten"; and there is also allusion to the Henry Cavendishes, whom Gilbert and his wife had invited to spend Christmas with them, but of whose acceptance they were still doubtful. "The invitation," comments Arbella, "is very cold if the Christmas guests you write of accept it not, for they knew their welcome and entertainment in a worse place, and yet were so bold to invite themselves thither. I humbly thank you that for my sake they shall be the welcomer to you, who, in regard of their nearness of blood to yourself and my aunt, must needs be so very welcome that (if you had not written it) I should not have thought they could have been more welcome to you in any respect than that." Of Cecil she writes, "I am witness not only of the rare gift of speech which God hath given him, but of his excellent judgment in choosing most plausible and honourable themes, as the defending a wronged lady, the clearing an innocent knight, etc." And so she closes with, "I have

reserved the best news for the last, and that is the King's pardon of life to the non-executed traitors. I dare not begin to tell of the royal and wise manner of the King's proceeding therein, lest I should find no end of extolling him for it, till I had written out a pair of bad eyes; and therefore praying for your lordship's happiness, I humbly and abruptly take my leave. From Hampton Court, the 18th of December, 1603."

But James was neither so generous nor so wise as Arbella believed him, and the "pardon for life" though promised, was never granted, while his after treatment of Raleigh and Grey is one of the darkest blots upon his reign. The Countess of Shrewsbury had a letter written three days later about an old servant named David, in which Arbella concludes, "The Polonian Ambassador had audience to-day. Other news there is none that I know, and therefore I beseech you make my excuse to my uncle that I write not to him in this busy time and scarcity of occurrence": while Cecil wrote at the same time to the Earl, envying his peaceful Christmas at Sheffield, and grumbling that "We are now to feast seven Ambassadors, Spain, France, Poland, Florence and Savoy, besides Masques and much more, during which time I would with all my heart I were with that noble lady of yours by her turf fire." Nevertheless Cecil was quite prepared to play his part. Amongst others Arbella sent him a small gift at the New Year, and a few days later wrote to her uncle in huge pleasure that, "My Lord Cecil has sent me a fair pair of bracelets this morning in requital of a trifle I presented him at New Year's-tide, which it pleased him to take as I meant it. I find him my very honourable friend in word and deed. I pray you give him such thanks for me as he many ways deserves, and especially for this extraordinary and unexpected favour, whereby I perceive his lordship reckoneth me in the number of his friends, for whom only such great persons as he reserve such favours." Poor Arbella could not yet believe her good fortune in being at last treated with the respect due to her birth, and was still and always grateful for any token of esteem.

Christmas and New Year were celebrated with all the

rowdy merriment dear to the first Stuart Court. There were three public Masques and thirty private ones, "besides two plays played before the Prince," who it is to be supposed was over-young yet to appreciate the broad humour of the rest. The two hundred magnificent gowns stored by Elizabeth in the Tower were dragged out, cut about, and worn as fancy dresses by the ladies of Anne of Denmark's household; and Arbella, writing soon after to her uncle, excuses the brevity of her letter, "proceeding partly of the shortness of my wit, who at this instant remember no news but is either too great to be contained in my weak paper, or too vulgar, or such as without detriment but of your lordship's expectation may tarry the next messenger. I have here enclosed sent your lordship the Bishop of Winchester's letter in answer of yours. I beseech you let me know what you writ, and what he answers concerning the party in whose favour I craved your letter, that I may let the good Warden know as soon as may be. My Lady of Worcester commendeth her as kindly to your lordship, and not to my aunt, as you did yourself to her in her ladyship's letter, and is as desirous to raise jealousy betwixt you two as you are like to do betwixt them. . . . I had almost tried whether your lordship would have performed a good office betwixt two friends undesired; for I had forgotten to beseech you to excuse me to my aunt for not writing to her at this time. I think I am asked every day of this New Year, seven times a day at least, when you come up, and I have nothing to say, but *I cannot tell*, which it is not their pleasure to believe, and therefore if you will not resolve them nor me of the truth, yet teach me what to answer them."

Anne of Denmark pleased her husband by accompanying him to Church this Christmas, but it was the last time she did so. A week later Sir Anthony Standen, who had been on an embassy to Rome, openly brought her some relics as a present from Pope Clement VIII to a hopeful convert; and James in a fury returned them at once, clapped Standen in the Tower, made some changes in the Queen's household, and set about framing a proclamation to banish all priests from England.

CHAPTER XI

OVERTURES FOR PEACE (1604-5)

THE Henry Cavendishes were doubly related to the Shrewsburys, since Countess Mary was Henry's sister, and Earl Gilbert's sister Lady Grace was Henry's wife: and in spite of recent disagreements, the Christmas party at Sheffield seems to have drawn together these two branches of that much entangled and usually quarrelsome family. Charles Cavendish and his wife Lady Ogle were already friends with both, but all were still at enmity with the old Countess, who, indeed, had by now quarrelled with almost every relative she possessed except her son William; and it was left for poor romantic Arbella to attempt the difficult task of making peace between them. Since her last sojourn at Hardwick, one has heard nothing of the relations between Arbella and her grandmother. They cannot have been of the smoothest, since both must have felt bitterly angry over what happened there; and though, no doubt, letters passed, these were all apparently destroyed. The first allusion we find is in a hasty note from Arbella at Hampton Court to her uncle the Earl, dated 2nd January, 1604, in which she promises to "reserve all I have to write of to your lordship—that is, some Hardwick news, and such vanities as this place and holy time afford me, till Emery's return, by whom I have received a large essay of your lordship's good cheer at Sheffield. I humbly thank you and my aunt for it." After this, she seems to have devoted herself to softening the stubborn heart of the old lady, and struggling again with the trouble in her eyes; for with the exception of a very brief note to her aunt on the 21st January, in which she begs "the sparing of my eyes till some other time, I beseech you; let these lines serve to testify to you both my obedience in writing by

every messenger though never so little"; it is a full month later, on the 3rd February, before she next addresses her uncle on the subject, and then with some triumph.

"Having sent away this bearer with a letter to my aunt and not your lordship, with an intention to write to you at length by Mr. Cooke, I found so good hope of my grandmother's good inclination to a good and reasonable reconciliation betwixt herself and her divided family, that I could not forbear to impart to your lordship with all speed. Therefore, I beseech you put on such a Christian and honourable mind as best becometh you to bear to a lady so near to you and yours as my grandmother is. And think you cannot devise to do me a greater honour and contentment than to let me be the only mediator, moderator, and peacemaker betwixt you and her. You know I have cause only to be partial on your side, so many kindnesses and favours have I received from you, and so many unkindnesses and disgraces have I received from the other party. Yet will I not be restrained from chiding you (as great a lord as you are) if I find you either not willing to harken to this good motion, or to proceed in it as I shall think reasonable. Consider what power you will give me over you in this, and take as great over me as you give me over you in this in all matters but one, and in that your authority and persuasion shall as far exceed theirs as your kindness to me did in my trouble. If you think I have either discretion or good nature, you may be sure you may refer much to me. If I be not sufficient for this treaty, never think me such as can add strength or honour to your family. But Mr. Cooke persuades me you think otherwise than so abjectly of me . . . I beseech you bring my uncle Henry and my aunt Grace up with you to London. They shall not long be troublesome to you, God willing; but because I know my uncle hath some very great occasion to be about London for a little while, and is not well able to bear his own charges, nor I for him, as I would very willingly if I were able, to so good an end as I know he comes to now. And, therefore, I beseech you take that pains and trouble of bringing them up and

keeping them awhile with you for my sake and our families' good. I have here enclosed sent you a letter to him, which if you grant him this favour I require of you, I beseech you send him; if you will not, return it to me, and let him not be so much discomforted to see I am not able to obtain so much of you for him. In truth, I am ashamed to trouble you with so many rude and (but for my sake, as you say) unwelcome requests; but if you be weary of me you may soon be despatched of me for ever (as I am told) in more honourable sort than you may deny this my very earnest request."

This last is an allusion to one of the rather numerous proposals of marriage made for Arbella at this time, none of which seem to have been very seriously considered. But she was not so good a diplomat as she had imagined, and the hoped-for reconciliation did not immediately take place. Money troubles were at the root of the Shrewsbury quarrel, as they are at that of most, and Bess was a grasping and rapacious woman. She had persuaded her husband, in the days when he adored her, to leave her all the money that should have gone to his own sons; and she now swore that the young Earl owed her £4,000, and that she would have it from him to the last farthing. With all his new Court expenses, Gilbert was heavily in debt, and could raise no such sum; and many and bitter were the recriminations between him, his brothers, and his stepmother. There is a long letter from Thomas Cooke or Coke, his steward, of the 12th February; in which, though speaking in high praise of Arbella, whom he evidently liked, Cooke gently insinuates that she had been "abused" in being "entertained with a motion of reconciliation, whilst in the very same instant a motion was secretly procured for proceeding in the matter of £4,000, as, indeed, it was and had been prejudicial if your honour's people that attend that business had not been careful to redress the same. But now the errors are (as I take it) allowed to be proceeded in, and so their advantage is where it was. My Lady Arbella but this answered: that my Lord should get more than this £4,000 of her that sueth; and that your honour and the

Lady Arbella should have business enough (perhaps) to keep them out of a worse place than that was, and where Mr. Ormeston visited Mr. Hamond, and what end this day's speech with her honour will sort, God knoweth, but surely she seemeth to have mastered them all that limited her before. She hath preferred her complaints to his Majesty's ear, that she can hardly think herself secure in case she may not have means to speak to his Majesty without such exceeding endeavour as she had now been constrained to use, whereupon Sir R. received (saith she, an extraordinary check), and her Ladyship hath mean hereafter to speak with him when she please."

Arbella's influence ran high now with the King; but Cooke, a level-headed man, seems a little doubtful of its value, and not quite sure whether her love of romance did not lead her to some trifling exaggeration. "Although I must confess that this Lady permitteth me to treat her with much less awe than I find in myself when I attend some others, yet doth the respect due to such a person prevail with me so as that in many things which fall from her, good manners lead me rather to rest unsatisfied than to interrupt her unseasonably, which is the cause why I cannot ascertain, your honour, whether this motion were made by herself to his Majesty when she attendeth him, or by some other. For although by all the speech of this day there is nothing to the contrary, yet her Ladyship's former relation of her speeches with the King, though never so restrained, make me something to doubt. Only I doubt not at all that she is resolute to do her uttermost endeavour." Gilbert was at this time strenuously attempting to raise a loan, in which Cooke was assisting him, and Arbella interested herself in the matter, while at the same time she worked her hardest to obtain a much coveted post for her uncle, Charles Cavendish. With regard to the loan, Cooke writes: "My good Lord Cecil seemeth little to approve the purchase. My Lady Arbella wished (at my last being with her) that your honour might lose the increasing of your debts by such a sum, but I having this day told her Ladyship that you have concluded for it, she saith she

is heartily glad. I have this day attended her with your honour's letters (and directions, which her Ladyship hath seen me burn), and concerning that whole matter I have not found but that she hath been even from the beginning very nobly resolved for Sir Charles. It is true that as I marvelled somewhat at the fulness of the reconciliation, upon some ground of affection (which notwithstanding is now almost exhaled), so I much feared what issue the course which her Ladyship in this would have. For I observed that she wrestled extraordinarily with my Lord Duke, Sir George Hume, and Sir Richard Asheton for access to the King, and betwixt jest and earnest, rather extorted the same from them by fear, than obtained it by kindness, and having obtained speech with His Majesty, and I after attending her, her Ladyship reserved herself (for from the beginning her Ladyship hath refused to declare to any of them, or whether this or some greater matter were that which caused her desire to speak with the K.) in such sort as that all that she vouchsafed to intrust unto me, was that she was in the King's good favour and trusted by him, that she doubted not but you should all find the fruits thereof, but (to my remembrance) said she had not yet moved His Majesty in that point which most I desired should have been moved, though the hope of obtaining was not so likely, as the purpose to *brauste* their designs. But this day her Ladyship saith plainly that the K. hath been moved and yielded unto her desire, and that she hath entreated His Majesty that in case he shall think it more fit for himself to take the honours of nominating the party than to refer it to her, yet he will be pleased to take notice of her desire therein, which is absolutely for her uncle Charles, whereunto (she saith) his Majesty hath condescended, and she is to have the same specified under his royal hand at his return from Royston, which is thought will be about four days hence."

This was certainly a niece worth having, and it is plain she did not mean to let her interest stop short at one favour apiece. Cooke concludes; "My Lady Arbella desireth that your hon. will be pleased that she may have a room

here at Broadstreet, for although she be most resolute not to budge from the Court, yet may she have many occasions of such a room. I never saw her more cheerful than this day she is. Her Ladyship told me of some aiguillettes which she had bespoken for my Lady Mary for the Queen, which to my remembrance her Ladyship said if you misliked she would herself use them."

The coronation of James and his wife had been a somewhat hurried affair, since until that had been accomplished, his title might still be called in question; but on the 15th March it was arranged that a Royal Progress should be made from Whitehall to the Tower. It was not quite the first but decidedly the most magnificent with which the new King had yet gladdened the eyes of his subjects; and in it Arbella was given second place to the Queen, by whom she rode on a horse decked with velvet, thus for ever settling the position her cousin intended she should occupy at Court. The Shrewsburys were now in town, and the Countess rode three behind her niece, but there is no reason to suppose she grudged her the greater honour, though many of the Court ladies made no concealment of the furious jealousy they felt for one who had hitherto held a curiously anomalous position among them. Nor was it only in the King's favour that Arbella basked. Queen Anne appointed her to the post of carver to herself, one for which few people can have been less fitted, and which brought her besides a whole whirlwind of ill-will. She herself, always rather aloof from the rest of the Court, seems scarcely to have noticed this, and rather ruefully explains what happened in a letter to her uncle. "After I had once carved, the Queen never dined out of her bedchamber, nor was attended by any but her chamberers till my Lady of Bedford's return. I doubted my unhand-some carving had been the cause thereof, but Her Majesty took my endeavour in good part, and with better words than that beginning deserved put me out of that error. At length (for now I am called to the sermon I must hasten to an end) it fell out that the importunity of certain great ladies in that or some other suit of the like kind had done

me this disgrace; and whom should I hear named for one but my aunt of Shrewsbury, who, they say, at the same time stood to be the Queen's cupbearer. If I could have been persuaded to believe, or seem to believe that whereof I knew the contrary, I might have been threatened down to my face that I was of her counsel therein, that I deeply dissembled with my friends when I protested the contrary; for I was heard to confer with her they say, to that purpose. But these people do little know how circumspect my aunt and your lordship are with me. I humbly thank you for the example."

In spite of her disclaimer, however, there rings a faint note of anxiety in the letter: "My aunt findeth fault with my brevity, as I think by your lordship's commandment; for I know she in her wisdom respecteth ceremony so little that she would not care in time of health for hearing from me every week that I am well and nothing else. And I know her likewise too wise to make that the cause of her offence, suppose in poliey she should think good to seem or to be offended with me, whom perchance you now think good to shake off as weary of the alliance. But I conclude your lordship hath a quarrel to me, and maketh my aunt take it upon her, and that is (for other can you justly have none) that you have never a letter of mine since your going down, to make you merry at your few spare hours, which if it be so, your lordship may command me in plain terms and deserve it by doing the like, and I shall as willingly play the fool for your recreation as ever. I assure myself, my Lord Cecil, my Lord Pembroke, your honourable new ally, and divers of your old acquaintance, write your lordship all the news that is stirring, so that I will only impart trifles to your lordship at this time as concern myself."

She has not yet given up all hope of peace-making, and explains, "I humbly thank your lordship for sparing me never so few words in the time of your taking physic, which I would not should have been more for doing you harm in holding down your head at such a time; but when you are well I hope to receive some Hardwick news, which, unless

your lordship be a great deal briefer than that plentiful argument requireth, will cost you a long letter." Her cousin, Mary Talbot, Gilbert's daughter, who had been with her during part of that miserable time at Hardwick, was now betrothed to William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, and was married to him not long after, in spite of rumours to which she alludes: "I hear the marriage betwixt my Lord of Pembroke is broken, whereat some time I laugh, otherwhiles am angry; sometimes answer soberly as though I thought it possible, according as it is spoken in simple earnest, scorn, policy, or howsoever at the least as I conceive it spoken. And your lordship's secrecy is the cause of this variety (whereby some conjecture I know something), because I have no certain direction what to say in that case. I was asked within these three days whether your lordship would be here within ten days; unto which (to me) strange question I made so strange an answer as I am sure either your lordship or I are counted great dissemblers. I am none; quit yourself as you may. But I would be very glad you were here, that I need not chide you by letter, as I must needs do if I be chidden either for the shortness, rareness, or preciseness of my letters, which by your former rules I might think a fault, by your late example a wisdom. I pray you reconcile your deeds and words together, and I shall follow that course herein which your lordship best allows of. In the mean time, I have applied myself to your lordship's former liking and the plainness of my own disposition."

The quarrels and jealousies at Court continued, and became bitterer and more spiteful every day. The old Earl of Worcester, writing to Shrewsbury, says: "Now having done with affairs of state I must a little touch the feminine commonwealth. . . . First you must know we have ladies of divers degrees of favour: some for the private chamber, some for the drawing chamber, some for the bed chamber, and some for neither certainly; and of this number is only my Lady Arbella and my wife." . . . As for the maids of honour, "The plotting and malice among them is such that I think envy and hatred hath

tied an invisible snake about most of their necks, to sting one another to death. . . . For the present, there are now five maids, Carey, Middlemore, Woodhouse, Gargrave and Roper; the sixth determined but not come. God send them good fortune, for as yet they have no Mother." No wonder that Arbella's quieter and more contemplative character made her a restful companion even to so lightheaded a woman as Anne of Denmark.

During this summer she busied herself to obtain a further favour for yet another uncle; for on the 4th July William Cavendish writes to his mother that "His Majesty four days since hath been moved by my Lady Arbella for me, who promiseth, as afore, at the next call, which it is thought will be at Michaelmas time, at the next session of Parliament." In this Arbella was endeavouring to please her still angry old grandmother, for William, her second, was ever Bess's favourite son, and she dearly wished a Barony to be bestowed upon him. This was, however, a matter not to be done in an hour, and some months had yet to elapse before it was accomplished.

The chief part of the summer was spent in the country, usually at Royston, the King's favourite hunting-box, where he could indulge in the sport he loved to his heart's content. Much though the rest of his Court disliked it, he insisted that all must accompany him; and the same Earl of Worcester probably only voiced the feelings of many when, writing from Royston, he complained that, "Since I have joined the Court here I have not had two hours of twenty-four of rest but Sundays; for in the morning we are on horseback by eight, and so continue from the death of one hare to another, until four at night, then, for the most part, we are five miles from home. By that time I find at my lodgings sometimes one, most commonly two packets of letters, all which must be answered before I sleep, for here is none of the Counsel but myself, no, not a clerk of the Counsel nor privy signet; so that an ordinary warrant for post-horses must pass my own hand, my own secretary being sick in London." It would be difficult to say whether the frivolous or the

open-air life were most wearisome to Arbella, whose tastes were before all those of a student. She hated discomfort, and living in a cold damp house with insufficient accommodation made her wretched. A miserable little note to her aunt, undated, but probably written at this time, portrays her state of mind, even though she never forgets to be grateful for the Queen's kindness. "Madame (she writes), this everlasting hunting, the tooth-ache, and the continual means by my Lord Cecil to send to you, makes me only write these few lines to show I am not unmindful of your commandments, and reserve the rest I have to write, both to you and my uncle some few hours longer, till my pain assuage, and I have given my never-intermitted attendance on the Queen, who daily extendeth her favours more and more towards me. The Almighty send you and my uncle all prosperity, and keep me still, I beseech you, in your good opinion, who will ever remain, Your ladyship's niece to command, Arbella Stuart."

Nor did the peasantry of the neighbourhood enjoy this invasion of their peace, and a quaint tale is told of the means by which they endeavoured to be quit of it. "There was one of the King's special hounds," writes Lodge, "called Jowler, missing one day. The King was much displeased that he was wanted; notwithstanding, went a-hunting. The next day when they were on the field, Jowler came in amongst the rest of them; the King was told of him, and was very glad, and, looking on him, spied a paper about his neck, and in the paper was written: 'Good Mr. Jowler, we pray you speak to the King (for he hears you every day, and so doth he not us), that it will please His Majesty to go back to London, for else the country will be undone; all our provision is spent already, and we are not able to entertain him longer.'" When it came to a question of good hunting, however, James found himself able to overcome his scruples concerning the welfare of his subjects, for the petition met with no response but a hearty laugh.

The King's real fondness for his cousin, and his interest

in her affairs was evidenced again this autumn when she was engaged in a law-suit with her tenant at Smallwood. On the 25th September there is a note to the effect that the King had written to the Earl of Derby, Chamberlain of Cheshire, that he "understands a cause is to be heard at the next Assizes between Lady Arbella Stuart and Edward Egerton, defendant, concerning the Manor of Smallwood in the County Palatine, Chester : and that the King requests the Earl to be present in the Court, and with the advice of the Justice of Assize to take care that the Lady Arbella be not injured." This was subscribed by Chief Justice Popham with the opinion that "such a letter is very reasonable."

Two rather stiff little letters written to her aunt and uncle in October of this year seem, after a long silence, to indicate that, whether caused by jealousy or not, some small disagreement had undoubtedly arisen between them and Arbella. Now, however, there is to be peace, and to the Countess she writes : "I was very glad to receive your letter and my Uncle's from that party which delivered them to me, with some news, which I am very glad of, and pray God to send your ladyship and my uncle as much joy thereof as yourselves desire. Mr. Cooke and your ladyship's red deer shall be very welcome, or any messenger or token whereby I may understand of your well being and the continuance of your affection"; while a fortnight later the Earl has from her : "I humbly thank your lordship and my aunt for the six very good red deer pies I have received from your lordship by Mr. Hercy. My aunt's thanks, which I received for my plain dealing with Mr. Booth, and the few lines I received last from you and my aunt by Mr. Hercy, have relation to certain commissions and promises, as well on your lordship's part as mine, and therefore your lordship's confidence of my conditional promise resteth not in me only. I assure myself you are so honourable, and I so dear unto you, that you will respect as well what is convenient for me as what you earnestly desire, especially my estate being so uncertain and subject to injury, as it is. Your

lordship shall find me constantly persevere in a desire to do that which may be acceptable to you and my aunt, not altogether neglecting myself. And so I humbly take my leave, praying for your happiness."

Arbella was now in her thirtieth year, an accomplished, virtuous, and kind-hearted woman; if not actually beautiful in feature, yet "fairer than fair," says the faithful Fowler, in the sympathy and intelligence which animated her charming face. She was also an undisputed favourite with both King and Queen; and yet, although two sons and a daughter had rendered the succession of James's line perfectly secure, and nobody could ever suppose Arbella likely to contest it, the one point in which James still showed himself ill-natured towards her lay in his absolute refusal to entertain any idea of her marriage. Several suitors made offers for her hand during this year, and since there could be no longer any question of her laying claim to the throne, it must be supposed that these were more or less attracted by her personal qualities. It is true that she was reported to have turned a deaf ear to all: "She will not hear of marriage," writes Fowler; but this is an attitude ladies have been known to adopt before when other circumstances make marriage impossible. One of her suitors was the Queen's own brother, Duke Ulric of Holstein, the "Dutchkin" of a former letter, who had been at the English Court since the preceding autumn, and must, therefore, have known Arbella well enough to desire her for herself. Lord Lumley says of him: "He is not very rich any way. He is said to be a comely man. He lodgeth in Court, in my Lord Treasurer's lodging, and his company in my Lord of Derby's house in Cannon Row. He hath twenty dishes of meat, allowed every meal, and certain of the guard appointed to attend him forthwith." Fowler, who kept Earl Gilbert well informed of all concerning his niece, seems to have been asked to intercede for another royal suitor, and writes: "Indirectly there were speeches used in the recommendation of Count Maurice, who pretendeth to be Duke of Gueldres; but I dare not attempt her": while yet another, Prince Anhalt,

hoped to win her favour by learned letters, but Fowler again chronicles : “ The Prince Anhalt has written to me, and albeit he toucheth nothing in his letters that concerns her, yet she nothing liketh his letters nor his Latin. Poland will insist, for his Marshal is upon his journey. God give her joy in the choice of her destiny ! ”

The last-mentioned suitor, the King of Poland, would indeed have been a good match for Arbella, and at one time it seems really to have been thought the marriage might take place. William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, now the husband of Shrewsbury's daughter Mary, writes to his father-in-law early in October that “ All the news is that a great Ambassador is coming from the King of Poland, and his chief errand is to demand my Lady Arbella in marriage for his master. So may our princess of the blood grow a great Queen, and then we shall be safe from the danger of mis-superscribing letters. I shall see your lordship myself ere it be many weeks, and, therefore, at this time I will humbly take my leave, remaining ever Your lordship's most affectionate son to serve you, Pembroke. You must pardon my short writing, for I am half drunk to-night.” But still James returned a stern refusal, and Arbella remained unwed. Anxious, however, that she should not think him unkind, the King this winter increased her allowance from £800 to £1,000 a year for life, by a grant of the 8th December, of which she must have been extremely glad; for her expenses were considerable, and grew greater every day.

Shortly after this, she paid a visit to her uncle and aunt at Sheffield Lodge, and was there attacked by measles, though fortunately not in a severe form; as we learn in a letter from Shrewsbury to Cecil of the 14th December. He and his wife thank God the measles have dealt so favourably with their niece, and that they have a “ mistress ” (nurse ?) who would not have been so careless of them as the Queen that now is. Ten days later she was back at Whitehall, for a rather languid letter from her, enclosing a fuller one from Fowler, bears date the 24th December. “ I have sent sooner than I had

time to write to your lordship of anything here," says she; "and yet not so soon but I am sure I am already condemned by your lordship and my aunt, either for slothful, or proud, or both, because I writ not by the very first who went down after I received your letters. So have I fully satisfied neither your lordship nor myself, and yet performed a due respect to a very honourable friend, whose honour and happiness I shall ever rejoice at, and think my own misfortunes the less if I may see my wishes for your lordship's and my aunt's permanent, happy, and great fortune take effect. . . . Though I have written your lordship no news, I have sent you here enclosed very good store from Mr. Secretary Fowler. My old good spy, Mr. James Murray, desireth his service may be remembered to your lordship and my aunt; but if I should write every tenth word of his, wherein he wisheth you more good than is to be expressed at Court on a Christmas Eve, you would rather think this scribbled paper a short text with a long comment underwritten, than a letter with a postscript."

Christmas, 1604, was spent to the full as merrily as the last; but Arbella, still weak after her illness, took no personal part in the Court Masques and theatricals. On Twelfth Night little Prince Charles, Duke of Albany, was created Duke of York, and knighted, together with several other little boys. He was just five, but still too delicate to walk, and so was carried in the Lord Admiral's arms: and in the evening Jonson's "Masque of Blackness" was given, and proved not altogether a success, since all the Court ladies had their faces blacked to resemble negresses, and cannot have presented a very engaging sight. Arbella must have been rather glad to have no place in it. There were, it is true, other and more beautiful pageants, in which Anne of Denmark delighted to appear, and people raved about her "seemely hayre downe trayling on her princely beaming shoulders": but a few more sober courtiers began to think with Dudley Carleton that the kind of costume worn at these shows was "too light and curtezan-like for such great ones." Queen

Anne was wildly extravagant, and could never have enough jewellery and expensive clothes, which very naturally raised the cost of living in her Court and made it increasingly difficult for those not too wealthily endowed to keep up with the lavish display expected of them. Many years later, when she died, she "left a world of brave jewels behind," and it was calculated that setting aside her personal expenditure, at least £60,000 a year was saved to the nation in the expenses of her household alone. Duke Ulric, her brother, was by now very popular with James, who bestowed on him £5,000 as a gift besides the Order of the Garter, and £100 a week for expenses. No wonder Ulric stayed on at his sister's Court. One great relief, however, must have been effected this year, in that no New Year's presents were given, and, says Dudley Carleton, "the exorbitant gifts that were wont to be used at that time are so far laid by that the accustomed present of the purse of gold was hard to be had without asking." This cut both ways of course, since presents were received as well as given; but on the whole it meant the remitting of a considerable tax.

From the Twelfth Night festivities the King went straight to hunt at Royston, whence he wrote to his Council, begging them to "foresee that he were not interrupted or troubled with too much business," since they were well aware that all the welfare of England was bound up in his health, and that could only be preserved by plenty of out-door amusement. After Royston he visited Thetford, liking it on the whole, though at first, writes Worcester: "He hath been but once abroad hunting since his coming hither, and that day he was driven out of the fields with press of company which came to see him; but therein he took no great delight, therefore came home, and played at cards. Sir William Woodhouse, that is sole director of these parts, hath devised a proclamation that none shall presume to come to him on hunting days; but those that come to see him, or prefer petitions, shall do it going forth or coming home."

James does not this time seem to have carried the whole

of his Court with him ; and many besides Arbella must have been glad that the delicate state of the Queen's health obliged her and her ladies to spend their early spring more quietly. On the 6th April, 1605, Anne gave birth to a daughter at Greenwich, and this being the first royal child born in England since Edward VI nearly seventy years before, it will easily be understood that it was made the occasion for very great rejoicing. The child was named Mary after the King's mother—his elder daughter had already been named Elizabeth after that mother's chief rival and enemy—and Arbella was asked to be one of the god-parents at the christening early in May. Old Lady Shrewsbury thought this a favourable moment to push the request for her son William's barony, as it was known that many honours were to be distributed on the occasion. The Dean of the Chapel Royal was in her pay as spyon all that passed at Court, a position he does not seem to have thought at all derogatory, for "I were much to blame," he writes; "if I should neglect anything that concerned her, for I have not known her yet a year, and she has already bestowed on me above £3,000." Referring to this reverend gentleman Edward Lascelles wrote to the Earl of Shrewsbury : "Mr. Deane told me that the special matters contained in his letter to the old Countess was to advise her entreaty of His Majesty that in regard of her services to him it would please His Majesty to make her son Candish a Baron, which she would think a sufficient honour and reward for all. That he thought the King might be wrought to it at the christening of this child. . . . I have writ to my lady news of Her Majesty's safe delivery, the day, the hour, therefore I trouble not your lordship with the recital of that news."

William Cavendish was not the eldest, but the favourite son ; and by far the most selfish and grasping. He, too, left no stone unturned to obtain the wished-for honour, and besieged Arbella with requests that she should use her influence for him ; but he was the one of her uncles whom she loved least, and she did not put herself to any great trouble concerning him. In a matter of this sort too,

money must be freely spent, and William hated to part with his cash. Edward Lascelles says: "Mr. Candish is at London, comes to court, and waits hard on my Lady Arbella for his barony; but I am confidently assured that he will not prevail, for I understand that my Lady Arbella is nothing forward in his business, although we be certainly informed that my lady hath a promise of the King for one of her uncles to be a baron; but it is not likely to be Mr. William, for he is very sparing in his gratuity, as I hear,—would be glad if it were done, but would be sorry to part with anything for the doing of it. . . . I was with Mr. Candish at my Lady Arbella's chamber, and he entreated me to speak to my Lady Bedford to further him, and to solicit my Lady Arbella in his behalf, but spoke nothing of any thing that might move her to spend her breath for him, so that, by the grace of God, he is likely to come good speed." The Earl of Worcester, writing on the 27th April to Arbella's uncle Gilbert, speaks also of the new peers to be created at "this pretty young lady's" christening; and mentions that the King had given his cousin a patent for whom she wished, with a blank for the name, "to be created either then, or hereafter to be named and created at her pleasure."

It was not certain, however, that she would use it for William, and in the midst of these negotiations (perhaps in consequence of the suspense and anxiety they entailed), old Lady Shrewsbury was suddenly taken seriously ill. A report was at one time current that she had died; but though this was untrue, it could not be expected that, at her advanced age, her life would be very long prolonged; and Arbella, forgetting the harshness of her later years, remembered now only her grandmother's early kindness to her "jewel Arbell," and resolved to visit her in her sickness. To the King she admitted that she still felt timid of her reception, and he good-naturedly wrote a letter to the old Countess, begging her to receive her granddaughter kindly and "with her former bounty and love." This rather enraged Bess than otherwise, and she revenged herself by making Arbella a handsome present

when she came, and writing a caustic letter to the Dean which he was instructed to read aloud to the King. "It was very strange to her," she said, "that my Lady Arbella should come to her with a recommendation as either doubting of her entertainment or desiring to come to her from whom she had desired so earnestly to come away. That for her part she thought she had sufficiently expressed her good meaning and kindness to her that had purchased her seven hundred pounds by year land of inheritance, and given her as much money as would buy a hundred pound by year more." (This is, of course, an allusion to the time when the old lady very effectively guarded her granddaughter's interests as a child.) "And though for her part she had done very well for her according to her poor ability, yet she should be always welcome to her, though she had divers grandchildren that stood more in need than she, and much the more welcome in respect of the King's recommendation; she had bestowed on Arbella a cup of gold worth a hundred pounds, and three hundred pound in money which deserved thankfulness very well, considering her poor ability." She then stated what Arbella had done every hour since she came to Hardwick; and the Dean reports that the King smiled when he heard the letter, a circumstance which did not tend to make her visitor any more welcome to the old lady.

Arbella may have hoped by this visit to make peace between her grandmother and uncle, but Sir Francis Leek, writing to Gilbert this spring, says: "I did never hear that the Lady Arbella's coming into this country was by your lordship's means, neither do I yet hear any cause of her coming down, but to see my old lady, her right honourable grandmother. But to deliver my own opinion, I did in my heart rejoice at her coming, and trusted the same would have redounded to the appearing, or at least entrance to qualify such controversies and suits as yet depend unended betwixt your lordship and my old lady."

Arbella cannot have remained long at Hardwick, for the royal christening was fixed for the 5th May, at Greenwich, and she had an important part to play at it. The

other Godmother was the Countess of Northumberland, while the Godfathers were Duke Ulric of Holstein and the Duke of Lennox, both of whom had at one time or another been put forward as suitors for Arbella's hand. The ceremony was performed in the greatest possible state. The baby princess was carried by the Countess of Derby under a canopy, held by eight barons, one of whom was the newly created Baron Cavendish, who thus had accomplished his own and his mother's dearest wish. The child's train was held by "two of the greatest countesses"; before her walked the Earl of Northumberland with a gilt basin and the Countess of Worcester with a cushion covered with jewels; on either side of her came her two Godfathers, and immediately behind, her two Godmothers; after whom followed a train of nobles and their ladies. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Deans of Greenwich and Canterbury received the procession at the entrance to the chapel, and led it into the midst of the choir, where the silver font stood under a canopy of cloth of gold; while the choir sang anthems of rejoicing. After the baby had been safely christened, the Lord Almoner, Bishop of Chichester, received the offerings of the Godparents; Garter King at Arms proclaimed the style of "the high and noble Lady Mary"; wine and cakes were distributed, and the procession returned to the palace, six Earls carrying the christening gifts.

On the fifteenth of September, 1607, not much more than two years later, little Princess Mary was buried quietly in Westminster Abbey, in what is known as "Innocents' Corner." She must have been a precocious little girl, for when dying, she raised herself to repeat the Lord's Prayer, cried "I go—I go away—I go!" and so fell back dead. The figure on her tombstone represents her lying on one elbow, as if speaking these last words: but when we consider the fate of her brothers and sister, one cannot feel that Arbella's godchild was greatly to be pitied in her early death.

CHAPTER XII

FRIENDS AND LOVERS (1605-7)

PRINCE HENRY, the idol of England, was now in his thirteenth year, and growing a person of great importance at his father's Court. Suits were granted at his request, and since he had from the first shown a warm admiration for Arbella, it was not surprising that he should be delighted at the opportunity of rendering her any little favour. Birch, his biographer, writes : " The Lady Arbella Stuart was not less dear to Prince Henry for her near relation to him than for her accomplishments of mind, both natural and acquired ; and, therefore, he took all occasions of obliging her. In consequence of this, and of the success of her recommendations of a kinsman of hers to his Highness, she wrote him, on the 18th of October, the following letter—

‘ My intention to attend your Highness to-morrow, God willing, cannot stay me from acknowledging by these few lines how infinitely I am bound to your Highness for that your gracious disposition towards me, which faileth not to show itself upon every occasion, whether accidental or begged by me, as this late high favour and grace, it hath pleased your Highness to do my kinsman at my humble suit. I trust to-morrow to let your Highness understand such motives of that my presumption as shall make it excusable. For your Highness shall perceive I both understand with what extraordinary respect suits are to be presented to your Highness, and withal that your goodness doth so temper your greatness as it encourageth both me and many others to hope that we may taste the fruit of the one by means of the other. The Almighty make your Highness every way such as I, Mr. Newton,

and Sir David Murray (the only intercessors I have used in my suits, or will in any I shall present to your Highness), wish you, and then shall you be even such as you are, and your growth in virtue and grace with God and men shall be the only alteration we will pray for. And so in all humility I cease. From London, the 18th of October, 1605. Your Highness' most humble and dutiful Arbella Stuart.' ”

The greatest hopes for England's future were placed in this young prince, who was understood also to be a fervid champion of the Reformed Faith. There was a prophecy that

“ Henry VIII pulled down abbeys and cells,
But Henry IX shall pull down bishops and bells ;”

but it is not altogether certain that if Henry had lived to be King he would have fulfilled all that was expected of him. He was a clever boy, but one incident related of him when quite a child, though amusing, is scarcely loveable. He had been entertained, while travelling, at a house where a very frugal table was kept; and next morning, his hostess finding him looking at a picture book, he showed her a picture of some great banquet, and said solemnly, “ I invite you, madam, to that feast.” “ What, your Highness,” said the poor lady playfully, “ to a painted feast ?” “ No better, madam, is to be found in this house,” replied the pert little prig.

His nature was really generous, however, and one of his best known traits is his admiration for Sir Walter Raleigh, still a prisoner in the Tower, but allowed now a certain amount of indulgence. Lady Raleigh had joined him, and he was busy writing books and making chemical experiments, while he was permitted to receive visitors, and many learned and distinguished people came to see him. Queen Anne had always had a great sympathy for Raleigh, and Prince Henry and his mother were warm friends, and shared many tastes in common. Henry often visited Raleigh, and on one famous occasion permitted his feelings to master him, and exclaimed aloud, “ No man



HENRY PRINCE OF WALES
By Paul van Somers

Photo, Emery Walker

but my father would keep such a bird in a cage." The sentence is illuminating, for there is little doubt that Henry and his father were not always on the very best of terms. James had written a book for his son, entitled *The Basilicon Doron ; or His Majesty's instructions to his dearest son the Prince ;* which was printed in 1699 and contained much worthy advice ; but, nevertheless, if truth is to be told, the most Christian King was just a little jealous of his son's popularity. Henry was young, handsome, easy-mannered, and the people adored him. He cared little for books, wished to be a soldier, and was interested in everything connected with the army ; while his father had only two tastes, learning and the chase, in neither of which his subjects showed much interest. As Charles grew older and proved a studious little boy, his father took pleasure in pointing out to Henry how much better a scholar his younger brother was likely to become than himself. Henry asked his tutor if this were true, and it could not be denied. "Then," said the elder prince, "when I am King I'll make him Archbishop of Canterbury" : and so dismissed the subject.

No New Year's gifts are recorded either from or to Arbella this winter, though several other persons gave them, and of those presented to the King we have a few curious specimens. The Earl of Shrewsbury sent him £20 in gold and the Countess £10 ; while from other friends he received "a pot of green ginger," a "bottle of the water of hartshorn," "one marchpane, and four boxes of dry confections," "a nightcap of tawny velvet embroidered with Venice gold and silk" ; and other strange offerings.

Little is known of Arbella's doings this year, 1606, since her aunt and uncle were probably at Court all the time, and therefore she wrote few letters. She is mentioned, however, as present with several others at the trial of Father Garnet on the 2nd April. The King's proclamation against priests had been tardily put into execution the September before, and the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot almost immediately after had roused the most savage feelings against the Catholics. Garnet announced at his

trial that the Queen was "most regarded of the Pope"; and James was so horrified at the words that he refused to allow this evidence to be published. Garnet was an Englishman, aged about fifty, and had been educated as a Protestant; but for the last eighteen years had become one of the most active Jesuit priests in the country. There was little chance that he could escape, and he suffered for misprision of treason the following month; Guido Fawkes having already been executed in January. No pity was wasted on the conspirators, for the plot they had concocted was a horrible one, and met with universal execration.

On the 22nd June Queen Anne gave birth, at Greenwich, to another daughter, who was hastily christened Sophia, and died the same day. The Queen herself was very ill, and could not be moved for some weeks, which was unfortunate, as her brother, the King of Denmark, arrived in July to pay her and her husband a visit. The two Kings, however, managed to make themselves very merry, and enjoyed many a tipsy revel together before the Queen and her Court were able to join them. They spent the time at Theobalds, witnessing Masques, playing games, and drinking heavily. Says Sir John Harington, "I have been well nigh overwhelmed with carousel and sport of all kinds. The sports began each day in such manner as had well nigh persuaded me of Mahomet's paradise. Our feasts were magnificent, and the two royal guests did most lovingly embrace each other at table. . . . The ladies abandon their sobriety, and are seen to roll about in intoxication." On one occasion it is said that a woman dressed to represent the Queen of Sheba in a Masque was herself so drunk that she flung the salver she carried at the King's head, and knocked him out of his seat. This tale was maliciously repeated as of "the Queen," a circumstance which caused Anne of Denmark considerable annoyance. She and her ladies joined the two Kings in August, though it is probable that Christian IV had already visited his sister at Greenwich, where he first saw and admired Arbella Stuart. A frank and downright monarch, he spoke his thoughts freely, and Arbella liked him for it;

but others were not so pleased, and considered his manners distinctly coarse. He knew no English, and when at last he had to bid his sister farewell, trying by signs to remind Lord Nottingham (in command of the royal ship) of the lateness of the hour, he succeeded only in mightily incensing the admiral's young wife, who imagined him instead to be offering her a very vulgar insult. Neither she nor her husband could speak Danish, so it was impossible to explain their meaning to the King at the time; but so soon as they reached home, Lady Nottingham wrote a violently abusive letter to Sir Andrew Sinclair, a Scotch gentleman in King Christian's service, which he was obliged to show his master; and the bewildered Dane bade him appeal to Arbella to implore her services as peacemaker, she being a connection of the insulted lady.

Sir Andrew accordingly wrote the following letter:—
“Madam, The King, my master, has commanded me to write his gracious commands to your Ladyship and to advertise your Ladyship that my Lady Nottingham has written to me this morning a letter, where her Ladyship has made the King my master notice of some speeches his Ma^{ty} should have spoken of her to her disadvantage, as your Ladyship may perceive by the Letter he has written to me, the which the King has sent to the Queen's Ma^{ty} his sister. So his Ma^{ty} desires that your Ladyship will defend his Ma^{ty}'s innocence in such things as his Ma^{ty} is assured that he is unjustly accused of. The Queen's Ma^{ty} will show your Ladyship the letter. Written in great haste. Andrew Sinclair.”

In equal haste Arbella returned the following cordial and generous note:—“My honourable good Friend, I yield His Majesty most humble thanks that it pleaseth him to add that advertisement I received from you yesternight to the rest of the favours wherewith it hath pleased His Majesty to honour me; and I pray you assure His Majesty that next unto that I shall spend in prayers for His Majesty's prosperity, I shall think that breath of mine best bestowed which may add, if it be but a drop, to the sea of his honour. I have observed His Majesty's

behaviour as diligently as any, and I may truly protest I never saw nor heard that deed or word of his which did not deserve high praise, whereof I shall bear witness, I doubt not with many more; for I assure you it is not possible for a Prince to leave a more honourable memory than His Majesty hath done here. And if any speak or understand it otherwise, it must proceed from their unworthiness, and be esteemed as a shadow of envy which infallibly accompanies the brightness of virtue. I spent yesterday in London, and have not yet seen the Queen's Majesty since her sorrowful returning hither, but I am assured myself her Majesty will perform all the offices of a kind sister to her most dear and worthy brother, in which cause I think myself happy to have a part. I beseech His Majesty this indiscretion of my Lady of Nottingham may not impair his good opinion of our sex, but that it will please him to retain the innocent in his wonted favour, and especially myself, who will not fail to pray for his safe and happy return with all other daily increasing felicities, and remaining Your assured, thankful friend, A. S."

Christian then wrote to Arbella himself, and she replied again through Sir Andrew, sending a little gift of her work to the Danish Queen. "You having not only performed the kindness I required of you," she writes, "in delivering my letters to their Majesties, but returned me so great and unexpected a favour as His Majesty's letters, have doubly bound me to you, and I yield you, therefore, many great thanks, beseeching you to continue in preferring their Majesties favour to me, for which good office I most desire to become obliged to you, so worthy and reverent a person. It may please you now with most humble thanks to present this letter to His Majesty, which is so very a trifle, as I was ashamed to accompany it with a letter to Her Majesty, and if a piece of work of my own, which I was preparing, had been ready, I had prevented His Majesty's gracious, and your kind letter, in sending to you, but I was desirous not to omit Her Majesty in the acknowledgment of my duty to her royal husband, and

therefore loth to stay the finishing of a greater, have sent this little piece of work, in accepting whereof Her Majesty's favour will be the greater. Thus, I am bold to trouble you even to these womanish toys, whose serious mind must have some relaxation, and this may be one to vouchsafe to descend to these petty offices for one that will ever wish your happiness increase, and continuance of honour."

Sir Andrew's reply is that "It has pleased both their Majesties to command me to write their Majesties' gracious recommendations to your Ladyship, and to thank your Ladyship for the honest favours it has pleased your Ladyship to bestow on both their Majesties, and especially the Queen esteems much of that present your Ladyship sent Her Majesty, and says Her Majesty will wear it for your Ladyship's sake. The King has commanded me to assure your Ladyship there is no honour, advancement, nor pleasure that His Majesty can do your Ladyship, but he shall do it, faithfully and willingly, as one of the best friends your Ladyship has in the world. Surely, I may confess with verity, I never heard no prince speak more worthily of a princess than His Majesty does of your Ladyship's good qualities and rare virtues; while I say no more, but I shall be one faithful instructor to entertain in the holy friendship between His Majesty and your Ladyship. As touching my Lady Nottingham, the King is now very well content with her Ladyship, because her letter was written of a little choleric passion, grounded on a fickler report, for His Majesty did never think that her Ladyship had only offended him, but only this that was."

So all was peace; and Arbella wrote again to Sinclair, and sent a pretty little note to the Queen, containing "most humble thanks for your gracious acceptance of that trifle, which, with blushing at the unworthiness thereof, I presumed to present unto your Majesty, only out of the confidence of the sympathy of your gracious disposition, to that I found in the most puissant and noble King, your husband"; and hoping, too, that "It will please you, by wearing my handiwork, to continue me in your gracious favour and remembrance." A Latin

letter from Arbella to Sir Andrew dated "Hampton Court, the 24th October," closes for a time the correspondence : and meanwhile her chief anxiety during this year had as usual been connected with money matters. Live as frugally as she might, her income was not half large enough to cope with the constant entertainments, Masques, and banquets, in a delirious round of which the Court moved, and most of which meant new raiment, not only for herself but for all her household. The King of Denmark's visit had, of course, brought extra expenses, and Arbella was at her wits' end how to meet them. She has been accused of rapacity and greed in asking for money, but it should be remembered that her private income was very small, and that she was almost entirely dependent upon her allowance from the King, and needed still to maintain her position in suitable state as second lady of the Court. In May she had written to Cecil (who the preceding year had been created Earl of Salisbury), "My good Lord, I lately moved His Majesty to grant me such fees as may arise out of his seal, which the bishops are by the law to use as I am informed. I am enforced to make some suit for my better support and maintenance, as heretofore I have found you, my good Lord, so I must earnestly entreat your lordship to further this my suit, and therein I shall rest much bound to you. Sir Walter Cope hath been requested to recommend this my suit to your lordship, for that I thought his mediation would be less troublesome to you than if I solicited your lordship myself, or by some other of my friends. I pray God grant your lordship long and happy life. Your lordship's much bound Arbella Stuart."

On the 9th March next year we find record of a "Grant to Lady Arbella Stuart of all sums paid into the Exchequer from the lands of Thomas, Earl of Ormond." All these little extras helped; and it was evidently in connection with some other suit of hers that Lord Lisle wrote to her uncle Gilbert that "I have yet done little in the matter of my Lady Arbella. I fear the Queen's inclination, and the doubt that it will be an entrance to put the whole down. My lady shall command me and my best services, and

much the more, seeing that your lordship doth make yourself a partner."

Arbella was never strong, and her health suffered often during the winter. In the early spring of 1607 it is evident she was too ill to remain at Court, and rather to the vexation of the Queen she retired for a while to the Shrewsbury's house at Sheffield. Whilst here, the King of Denmark besought his sister to gain Arbella's consent to parting with her favourite lute-player, a man named Cutting, whose performance he had greatly admired the preceding summer, and whose services he was anxious to transfer to his own Court. This was scarcely an easy favour to ask, since Arbella could not, of course, be so ungracious as to refuse it; and the Queen's rather cross little letter to her, accompanied by a small gift, shows at once her own embarrassment at the request, and her impatience for her friend's return. She hit, however, upon the happy thought of bidding her son, Prince Henry, to write too; and his warm and unconventional note must have been pleasant to receive. These are the letters.

" Anne R. Well-beloved Cousin, We greet you heartily well. Udo Gall, our dear brother's, the King of Denmark's gentleman servant, hath insisted with us for the licensing of your servant, Thomas Cutting, to depart from you, but not without your permission, to our brother's service; and therefore we write these few lines unto you, being assured you will make no difficulty to satisfy our pleasure and our dear brother's desires, and so giving you the assurance of our constant favours, with our wishes for the continuance or convalescence of your health. Expecting your return, we commit you to the protection of God. From Whitehall, 9th March, 1607."

" Madame, The Queen's Majesty hath commanded me to signify to your ladyship, that she would have Cutting, your ladyship's servant, to send to the King of Denmark, because he desired that she would send him one that could play upon the lute. I pray your ladyship to send him back with an answer as soon as your ladyship can. I desire

you to commend me to my Lord and my Lady Shrewsbury ; and also not to think me anything the worse scrivener that I write so ill, but to suspend your judgment till you come hither, when you shall find me as I was ever, Your ladyship's most loving cousin and assured friend, Henry. A Madame Arbelle, ma cousine."

Arbella could not pretend to be other than very loth to lose her favourite musician, and while freely consenting to his departure, was at no pains in her replies to these letters to conceal her real feelings. She was on the whole, however, very good-natured about it, and even concludes with a little joke to the Prince. " May it please your most royal Majesty," she writes to the Queen ; " I have received your Majesty's most gracious and favourable token which you have been pleased to send me as an assurance both of your Majesty's pardon and of my remaining in your gracious good opinion, the which how great contentment it hath brought unto me I find no words to express. And therefore most humbly addressing myself to the answer of your Majesty's pleasure, signified in your letter touching my licensing my servant Cutting to depart from me for the service of his Majesty of Denmark, I shall beseech of His Majesty to conceive, that although I know well how far more easy it is for so great a prince to command the best musicians in the world than for me to recover one not inferior to this, yet do I most willingly embrace this occasion whereby I may in effect give some demonstration of my unfeigned disposition to apply myself ever unto all your royal pleasures. And therefore most willingly referring my said servant to your Majesty's good pleasure " ; she concludes. To the prince she writes : " May it please your Highness, I have received your Highness's letter, wherein I am let to understand that her Royal Majesty is pleased to command Cutting, my servant, for the King of Denmark, concerning the which your Highness requested my answer to Her Majesty, the which I have accordingly returned by this bearer, referring him to Her Majesty's good pleasure and disposition. And although I may have

seen cause to be sorry to have lost the contentment of a good lute, yet must I confess that I am right glad to have found any occasion whereby to express to Her Majesty and your Highness the humble respect which I owe you, and the readiness of my disposition to be conformed to your good pleasures, wherein I have placed a great part of the satisfaction which my heart can receive. I have, according to your Highness's direction, signified unto my uncle and aunt of Shrewsbury your Highness's gracious vouchsafing to remember them, who with all duty present their most humble thanks, and say they will ever pray for your Highness's most happy prosperity. And yet my uncle saith he carrieth the same spleen in his heart towards your Highness that he hath ever done. And so praying the Almighty for your Highness's felicity, I humbly cease."

To King Christian himself Arbella sent a letter by Cutting, whom she dispatched as soon as possible; and since the Danish King could not speak English, her learning here stood her in good stead, for she wrote to him in Latin; assuring him that "Since I have sought nothing with more diligence or eagerness than an occasion of expressing my zeal and devotion to your Majesty, I have most joyfully seized this, slight as it is, which at last opportunely offers itself. This man has been sent to the best masters, and trained in this art to my pleasure, and came to me with no slight recommendation for the excellence of his character as of his art. Him I commend no less (with your Majesty's permission), and send to your Majesty, to whom I would send, were it as possible, Orpheus or Apollo. I pray the most high God that all things, not only among your musicians and in the court, but also in your life and kingdom, may be in harmony with your Majesty's desires." If this Thomas Cotting or Cutting was, as is generally supposed, identical with the Mr. Francis Cuttunge, who was a famous musician of the period, he cannot have remained long in Denmark, for he is mentioned as a member of Prince Henry's own household in 1610.

Arbella stayed some time at Sheffield, where she enjoyed

the quiet life, and where her uncle and aunt were glad of her company; since their youngest daughter Alethea had a year before been married to the Earl of Arundel. Gilbert and Mary's two sons died young; and their two elder daughters, Mary, Countess of Pembroke, and Elizabeth, Countess of Kent, had no children. Alethea, the youngest of the family, seems to have been a very charming girl: a letter from Charles Cavendish to his sister mentions that "Alethea is often wished with your ladyship: she is so merry and talkative, and as pretty attired as any is." By July Arbella was back at Court in order to be present at the great christening party given for Alethea's first child; the King and the Lord Chancellor being Godfathers, and Arbella standing proxy for her grandmother, the Dowager Countess, who was now too old to leave Hardwick. It is to be supposed that the reconciliation between these two ladies was sealed so far as it was ever likely to be by this act; for after her hurried visit in the spring, Arbella never saw her grandmother again. The friendly meeting she had hoped to bring about between the old lady and Earl Gilbert took place in December, when the young Earl writes to Cecil that he and his wife and Charles Cavendish had been at Hardwick and seen there "a lady of great years, great wealth, and great wit which yet remaineth. She used me with all the kind respect and show of good affection that might be, stayed us there with her one day, and so in all kindness I returned without any repetition or so much as one word of any former suits or unkindnesses: neither was there any motion on either side, but only compliment, courtesy, and kindness." Henry Cavendish was the only one of her children towards whom the fierce old woman remained implacable to the last. He was her eldest son, and by far the most interesting of the Cavendishes. In his youth he had travelled much in the East, had written an account of his travels, and was a far more romantic and disinterested character than his brothers though not so pushing a courtier: but the aged Countess spoke of him as her "bad son Henry," never forgave him his interference on Arbella's behalf in 1603; and imme-

diately after that episode had added a codicil to her will to the effect that "Forasmuch as she had changed her mind touching her bequests and legacies to her granddaughter Arbella Stuart and her son Henry Cavendish, and was fully determined that neither her said granddaughter nor the said Henry Cavendish shall have any benefit by any such gift or legacy, every gift or legacy that she had appointed for either shall be utterly frustrated, void, and of none effect." This codicil was never revoked.

On the 6th September the Court was thrown into slight mourning, but very slight, by the death in her third year of little Princess Mary, Arbella's royal godchild. "The Queen takes this losse naturally," wrote Cecil at the time, "But I assure you, now it is irrevocable, she and the King both digest it very well and wisely." "The King," says another courtier, "takes her death as a wise prince should," ordered the interment to be performed as quietly as possible, "without any solemnitie nor funerall," and went off on a hunting party a week later. The Queen was almost as fond of these expeditions as her husband, and although the Court remained ostensibly at Whitehall through the winter, everybody was frequently swept into the country at the shortest possible notice to indulge their master and mistress in their favourite sport. Anne had a stand set up for her in the park, where she sat with a cross-bow, while deer were driven before her; but she does not appear to have been a very expert markswoman, and one day the King's "special and favourite hound," Jewel or Jowler, of whom we have before heard, fell a victim to an ill-aimed arrow from her bow. Every one was terrified to tell James what had happened, but when it was at last explained to him, the incident shows him in the kindest light as a husband. He sent word to his wife "not to be concerned at the accident, for he should never love her worse"; and with the message came a gift of jewels, worth £2,000, as a legacy from the murdered favourite.

Gradually, however, one notes in the letters of the day thankful intimations that the King's appetite for the chase was not quite so insatiable as of yore. "The King is

indifferent well pleased with his hunting," writes Sir George Chaworth in the end of November ; . . . "and is not so earnest without all intermission or respect of weather, be it hot or cold, dry or moist, to give to his hunting or hawking as he was. . . . He is more apt to take hold of a let, and a reasonable wind will blow him to and keep him at home all day "; while at Christmas the Earl of Pembroke wrote to his father-in-law, Earl Gilbert, that "These holidays have brought us some rest, as welcome as to schoolboys, for till Christmas Eve we have been in perpetual motion; and as soon as Twelfth Tide is passed, we shall begin our voyage again, I am afraid." In spite of all the hunting, however, and in spite of her allowance for "diet," Arbella, and many other people, too, was glad enough of the venison pasties from her uncle's good red deer, which he frequently sent to Court. On the 2nd December she writes to him from Whitehall, "very glad of the occasion of so good a messenger and so honourable and kind a letter as I received from your lordship by Mr. Parker to scribble unto you again, and that a great deal the rather because this short time and calm climate affording none, you have given me the best theme to write of, which is thanks for your not checking my importunity in begging venison, but endeavouring to satisfy it in better sort than I presumed of, for the worst hind of many, I am sure, in any of your grounds should be very welcome hither; and then if it be possible to have so good a one as your lordship wishes, you know what a delicate it will be to them that shall have it, and how welcome such a testimony of your love and favour shall be to me." The only other specimen we have of her correspondence this year is a note to Sir Roger Wilbraham of the 3rd November, commending to his favour a man named Richard Albourne, on whose behalf she had interested herself.

The winter 1607-8 was one of extraordinary rigour, and the Thames was frozen into a solid road for three months, crossed by heavy wagons and all the traffic of the highway. To make up for poorer folks' privations, the Court became more extravagant than ever, and there was much gaming

for high stakes : on Twelfth Night a " great golden play " was given, at which no one was permitted to play for less than £300. The following Sunday Jonson's " Masque of Beauty " was performed, concerning which and the marvellous costumes and jewels to be worn in it, gossip had been rife for weeks beforehand. Fifteen ladies took part in the Masque, the Queen, Arbella, and her cousin, the young Countess of Arundel, amongst them; and the whole, says Rowland Whyte, " was as well performed as any ever was." John Chamberlain wrote to Dudley Carleton that there was a great show of jewels. " One lady was furnished with more than a hundred thousand pounds worth . . . and the Lady Arbella exceeds her, and the Queen must not come behind." When all was over, the Spanish Ambassador invited the distinguished performers to sup with him, and bring what friends they chose, and we may be sure that a riotous evening followed. The King, however, grew quickly bored with all these festivities, and as soon as possible after their conclusion hurried off to Theobalds, which was now his own property; he having persuaded Cecil to exchange it with him for the till then royal dwelling of Hatfield.

CHAPTER XIII

A CLOUDY SKY (1608-9)

FROM these gay scenes Arbella was called away by the scarcely unexpected news of the death of her grandmother. In her ninetieth year, rich, tyrannical, much feared and little loved, the Dowager Countess of Shrewsbury, having survived her four husbands, died at Hardwick Hall on the 13th February, 1608. Lodge describes her as "A woman of masculine understanding and conduct, proud, furious, selfish and unfeeling; she was a builder, a buyer and seller of estates, a moneylender, a farmer, a merchant of lead, coals, and timber"; and a great deal more besides: but first and foremost will she always be remembered for her building mania. To excuse it, the tale is told of a gipsy warning long before to the effect that she would never die so long as she kept on building; and build she did her long life through until the great frost of this year, when for a time it became impossible to do so. Her workmen made their best endeavour, mixing hot ale with the mortar, at that time considered a sovereign specific; but all was of no avail, and operations had to cease for a time, whereupon the redoubtable lady died. She had been failing, however, for some weeks; and the month before, Gilbert had written to Henry Cavendish, "When I was at Hardwick, she did eat very little and was not able to walk the length of the chamber between two, but grew so ill at it as you might plainly discern it." The Shrewsburys were with her at the end, and the day after her death Gilbert wrote to Cecil, informing him that she had "had the blessing of sense and memory to the last;" and enclosing too a note to Arbella with the news. In her will the deceased lady had announced that "I will and appoint



Photo, Emery Walker

ELIZABETH, COUNTESS OF SHREWSBURY
"Bess of Hardwick"

that my family be kept together at my ordinary Expences until my body shall be buried": but the breath was scarcely out of the hard old woman's body before all her children, stepchildren and grandchildren were squabbling over her property, and the most grasping and callous of them all was her favourite son William, the one person in the world to whom she had at times been weakly indulgent. She had appointed him her executor, and left him Chatsworth, Hardwick and Oldcotes, while Welbeck and other estates went to her third son Charles; her daughters were to have the portions settled upon them at marriage; a thousand pounds was to be divided among her servants; and to each inhabitant of the almshouses she had built at Derby twenty shillings and a mourning gown were to be given on the day of her funeral.

Before the will was even opened, however, William had taken possession of Hardwick, seized all the sheep and cattle on the estate, and behaved in so rude and overbearing a manner to his assembled relatives that the Shrewsburys could suffer him no longer, and hastily returned, together with the Charles Cavendishes, to Sheffield, where a few days later Arbella joined them. On the 1st March Gilbert wrote to Salisbury that he knew nothing of William Cavendish or his doings, but that Arbella was "somewhat ill at ease." This can scarcely have been for fear William had seized any legacy belonging to herself, since she knew very well that both she and her uncle Henry had been disinherited; but although she did not like Lord Cavendish, Arbella hated to be on ill terms with any one; and since he was in some sort beholden to her for his barony, he seems to have invited her shortly after to Hardwick. Her visit must have been a brief one, and possibly she only spent a night there, for her letter to Lady Shrewsbury is written on the eve of her departure. "Madame," she writes, "I humbly thank you for your letters. I deferred to write to you till I had taken my leave here, and then I intended to have sent one to your ladyship and my uncle, to deliver my humble thanks for so many kindnesses and favours as I have received at this time of my being here

from you both, and to take a more mannerly farewell than I could at our parting; but your ladyship hath prevented my intention in sending this bearer, by whom, in these few lines, I will perform that duty (not compliment) of acknowledging myself much bound to you for every particular kindness and bounty of yours at this time, which reviveth the memory of many more former; and to assure you that none of my cousins, your daughters, shall be more ready to do you service than I. The money your ladyship sends my Lady Pembroke shall be safely and soon delivered her. And praying for your ladyship's happiness, honour and comfort in as great measure as yourself can wish, I humbly take my leave. From Hardwick, this Monday. Your ladyship's most affectionate niece to command, Arbella Stuart. I pray your ladyship commend me to my uncle Charles, my aunt, and my two pretty cousins. I think I shall many times wish myself set by my cousin Charles at meals."

On the 23rd March, a letter from Gilbert to Lord Salisbury, asking for the living of Leadenham for his own chaplain, John Craven, mentions that Arbella has gone to town, and has had a drawing made of Chatsworth, which she intends to present to him, Salisbury. In his first letter of condolence to Gilbert, Salisbury had remarked that he would be "very glad if your lordship could send me any rough draught of Hardwick"; but apparently that was impossible, and this the best that could be procured. Old Lady Shrewsbury had made careful arrangements for her own burial, which she wished to take place in All Hallows Church, Derby, "in decent and convenient order, fit for her estate and degree," but not "over sumptuous, with vain and idle charge." Although she had died early in February, and the date of interment inscribed upon her coffin lid is 16th February, she does not really seem to have been buried till towards the end of April, since Earl Gilbert, writing to Salisbury, begged to be excused from appearing at St. George's Feast on the 23rd of that month, as his mother-in-law's funeral was fixed for the same time; and "you will be there so many besides

as I shall not be missed, and I being able to do His Majesty no other service by my coming than a short march in a purple robe." It is possible that the phenomenal cold of this winter had delayed matters in some way, for the frost did not break up till April, and then very hot weather immediately set in. The following epitaph on Bess of Hardwick, written in MS. by Horace Walpole on the margin of a copy of Arthur Collin's *Historical Collections of the Noble Families of Cavendish* at the British Museum is perhaps more illuminating than the ornate one she herself arranged for the magnificent monument beneath which she lies in the great church at Derby.

“When Hardwick’s towers shall bow their head,
Nor mass be more in Worksop said,
When Bolsover’s fair frame shall tend,
Like Oldecotes to his destined end,
When Chatsworth knows no Candish bounties,
Let Fame forget this costly countess.”

William Cavendish did not even wait till his mother was laid in her grave to plunge into gay and ambitious schemes. On the 10th April all the Court was startled to learn of a hurried and secret marriage between his young son William and the daughter of Lord Kinloss, Master of the Rolls; an affair in which both the King and Arbella were supposed to have lent their assistance as matchmakers, although neither was actually present at the wedding, which was performed very quietly at eight in the morning in the Chapel of the Rolls. Immediately after it, Lord Cavendish went himself to Whitehall to invite Arbella and other friends and relatives to the marriage dinner; and a letter written to Earl Gilbert by Henry Cavendish, who, in spite of all, seems to have remained on at least outwardly friendly terms with the brother who had usurped his birthright, gives a naïve account of the affair and of the manner in which it was broken to him. “My most honoured lord,” he wrote, “On Sunday last I wisht I could have sent your good lordship a dove with a letter under her wing to have advertised your lordship of such news as came very strange to me. About the hour of nine

in the morning, at which time my Lord Cavendish sent to me by his man Smith to excuse him that he had not made me privy to his son's marriage to the Lord of Kinloss's daughter. The reason was he had great enemies, and if it had been made public, he might have been crossed, and the reason he so married him was to strengthen himself against his adversaries. I wisht all might prove to their comforts. My Lady Arbella was there at the dinner, and my Lady Cavendish the Baroness, and so were they at supper, and both danced in rejoicing and honour of the wedding. The bride is meetly handsome as they say, of a red hair, and about twelve years of age. Alas! poor Wylkin! He desired and deserved a wife already grown, and may evil stay twelve weeks for a wife, much less twelve months. . . . The next day I waited on my Lady Arbella at Whitehall, and told her honour I thought it was she that made the match, which her ladyship denied, but not very earnestly, affirming she knew nothing of it till that morning the marriage was, and that was an invitation to the wedding dinner. I told her ladyship *much my betters would think so, and ten thousand beside.*" Pomfret says the bride was "a pretty red-headed wench," with a "porcion of several thousand pownde"; and as matters turned out, in spite of Henry's gloomy prognostications, the marriage was a very happy one.

Expenses still increased every day, and from the prominent position she occupied at Court, and the great favour with which both King and Queen regarded her, nobody would believe that Arbella's income could be so small as it really was. We know from her Steward's book that the following year all she received from every source amounted to £2160. Besides the extravagances of fashion with which it was necessary for her to keep in touch, she had her household to maintain, and was besides always being asked for favours and charity. It was an age of bribery, and often she was at her wits' end to know how to meet her bills, and driven to all sorts of expedients to gain a little more money. In July she begged the King to grant her the monopolies on oats, and her uncle Shrewsbury wrote

out for her a Proclamation, which she wished the King to sign, together with some reasons why he should accede—

“ A Copy of that which the King’s Majesty is to be moved to sign touching Oats. July 1608.

“ Our will and pleasure is, that there be given and granted unto our trusty and well-beloved cousin, the Lady Arbella Stuart, and unto her deputy or deputies, for and during the whole term of one-and-twenty years next after the date of our letters patent, sufficient power and authority under our great seal of England, for us, and in our name and right and to our use in all places within our realm of England and Wales, to take yearly a bond or recognizance of five pounds of every inn-holder or hostler, wherein the said inn-holder or hostler shall be bound not to take any more than sixpence gain, over and above the common price in the market, for and in every bushel of oats which he or they shall sell in gross or by retail, unto any passengers or travellers. The said bushel also, or any other measure, to be according to the ancient measure or standard of England, commonly called Winchester measure. And we will also, that our said well-beloved cousin, the Lady Arbella, or her deputy or deputies, shall take for every such bond or recognizance of every inn-holder or hostler the sum of 2s. 6d., whereof one full fifth part, our will is that she or her deputy or deputies shall retain to her or their own use, in consideration of pains and charges. And our further pleasure is, that our said cousin shall have full power and authority to depute any person or persons, during the said term, for the execution of the foresaid power, so given and granted unto her.”

“ Reasons wherfore His Majesty may grant this suit—

“ 1. Your Majesty’s revenues shall be increased a 1000 livres per annum, without any charge to your Majesty.

“ 2. The inn-holder or hostler shall receive ten times more than ever any law heretofore allowed them.

“ 3. The travelling subjects of all sorts, as noblemen, judges, lawyers, gentlemen, linnen-men, woollen-men, hardware-men, and carriers, who are the upholders of all trades

within this land, shall in their travel be much eased; and thereby wares may be sold in the country the cheaper.

“4. The common measure of this land shall then be used, which now it is not, for the inn-holder and hostler doth by his hoslry make six pecks at the least of every bushel, and so thereby every one only quarter of oats sold by them, retailed weekly, amounteth at the least to forty-five pounds in the year or thereabouts, and they buy the same generally at ten shillings at the most.

“5. In the last dear years, the inn-holders did raise the price of oats to sixpence their peck, which they sold before for threepence or fourpence at the most; since which time they never abated the price of sixpence their peck.”

Arbella never seems to have received these monopolies, though on the 25th of July we find among Bacon's notes, “To remember to be ready for argumentation in my Lady Arbella's cause, before term, and to speak with my Lord of Salisbury about it, chiefly in point of profit, and the judges to be made and prepared (though my lady be otherwise remembered).” In October, Chamberlain has an extraordinary story that there is “the muttering of a bill put into the Exchequer or some other Court concerning much land, that by reason of pretended bastardy in Queen Elizabeth should descend to divers persons. The chief actors named in it are Lady Arbella, St. Leger of the West, and others. If there be any such thing, methinks the whole State should prevent such an indignity.” The “if” was a great one, however, and since of this too one hears no more, it is probably as idle a rumour as much else concerning Arbella.

On the 8th December we have a letter from her to Shrewsbury, accompanied by a cheese and a salad as some return for the red-deer pies, in which, as usual, she begins with an apology: “I was much ashamed to be overtaken by your lordship's letter by Mr. Fowler, before I had answered your former, but I presume of your pardon for such peccadilloes. Good wishes can never come amiss, whether from amongst cups or beads, and therefore at all

adventures I humbly thank your lordship. For want of a nunnery, I have for a while retired myself to the Friars, where I have found by experience this term how much worse they thrive who say, 'Go ye to the plough,' than 'Go we to the plough,' so that once more I am fettling myself to follow the lawyers most diligently. I pray God the cheese I herewith send your lordship prove as good as great (which few of you great lords are, by your leave), and truly I hope well of it, because the fellow of it which is tasted here is so. And as I have sent your lordship some of the stoppingest meat that is, so I have sent you some of the sharpest sallet that ever I eat. A great person loveth it well (as I told your lordship at my being with you), and that is all I can say in commendation of it. If you have of it in the country, I pray you let me know, that I may laugh at myself for being so busy to get this. 'God send you a good stomach and a good digestion,' shall be the motto to these two bodies of sallet and cheese, I hope with the good allowance of all the impresa-makers by North Trent. And so beseeching the Almighty to send you all honour and happiness I humbly cease. Your lordship's niece, Arbella Stuart. From Blackfriars the 8th December 1608."

She must have been taken ill amost immediately after this, for on the 21st December, Sir John Harington, writing to a friend, remarks: "I hear now that my Lady Arbella is fallen sick of the small pox, and that my Lady Skinner attendeth her, and taketh great pains with her." She was evidently ill for some time, for it is not till the 2nd February 1609, Candlemas Day, that we hear of her again. Ben Jonson's *Masque of Queens* was given then at Whitehall, and Arbella as usual took part in it; but from this time on one begins to notice faint and almost imperceptible indications that she was scarcely in so great favour at Court as formerly. It is difficult to account for this save by remembering that the royal smile is proverbially capricious; but there is no doubt that she was increasingly involved in money difficulties, and it may be that her constant application for grants or monopolies annoyed the King, and

courtiers are ever quick to notice any coolness in the supreme quarter. Early in February she had petitioned James to be allowed to bring Irish hides to market in this country, and for a licence "to export forty thousand hides yearly for thirty-one years, paying a poundage thereon and a rent of fifty per annum, with reasons in favour of her petition." A few months later, by Lord Salisbury's help, she attempted to obtain the power of nominating persons to sell wines and aqua vitæ in Ireland, a patronage which might add a good deal to her income; but the favours she requested were not always for herself. On the 17th June she writes to her uncle from his house in Broad Street, where she had apartments, begging him to bestow livings upon two protégés of hers.

"Because I know not that your lordship hath forsaken one recreation that you have liked heretofore, I presume to send you a few idle lines to read in your chair, after you have tired yourself either with affairs or any sport that bringeth weariness; and, knowing you well advertised of all occurents in serious manner, I make it my end to make you merry, and show my desire to please you even in playing the fool, for no folly is greater, I trow, than to laugh when one smarteth; but that my aunt's divinity can tell you St. Lawrence, deriding his tormentors even upon the gridiron, bade them turn him on the other side, for that he lay on was sufficiently broiled, I should not know how to excuse myself from either insensibleness or contempt of injuries. I find if one rob a house and build a church with the money the wronged party may go pipe in an ivy leaf for any redress; for money so well bestowed must not be taken from that holy work, though the right owner go a-begging. Unto you it is given to understand parables or to command comment; but if you be of this opinion of the Scribes and Pharisees, I condemn your lordship, by your leave, for an heretic, by the authority of Pope Joan, for there is a text saith, you must not do evil that good may come thereof. But now from doctrine to miracles. I assure you within these few days I saw a pair of virginals make good music without help of any

hand, but of one that did nothing but warm, not move, a glass some five or six feet from them. And if I thought thus great folk, invisibly and far off, work in matters to tune them as they please, I pray your lordship forgive me, and I hope God will, to whose holy protection I humbly recommend your lordship. . . . I humbly pray your lordship to bestow two of the next good parsonnages of yours shall fall on me; not that I mean to convert them to my own benefit, for though I go rather for a good clerk than a worldly-wise woman, I aspire to no degree of Pope Joan, but some good ends, whereof this bearer will tell your lordship one. My boldness shows how honourably I believe of your disposing of such livings."

In the end of June Earl Gilbert writes to Salisbury from Sheffield, mentioning that Lady Arbella Stuart had told him that the City of London desired to buy Houghton, which was part of the Queen's jointure, and lay within a mile of Pontefract Castle; but that he considered this would be "so great a prejudice to that fair and stately castle," that he would gladly buy the lands himself for his brother Charles Cavendish. Earlier this year we find a hint at some scandal in connection with Charles Cavendish's eldest son William in a note of Arbella's to one Charles Gosling, with whom she appears to be on very friendly terms. Only the signature and the postscript of this letter are in her own hand. "Charles Gosling" (it runs), "Upon the good conceit I have of you for a just, well-meaning man and well-wishing to me, I have thought fit to write you this letter, desiring you to call to remembrance all you can, and take your son's help wherein he knoweth, or both or either of you think you can learn out anything of the contract between my cousin William Candish and Mrs. Margett Chaterton. That write to me so soon as you can, and if you can believe I have power to do you or your son good, expect my remembrance of what you do herein. And so I commit you to God. From the Court at Whitehall, this 28th of March, 1609. Your loving friend, Arbella Stuart. Remember the old buck of Sherland, and the roasted tench I and other good company eat so saourly

at your house, and if thou be still a good fellow and an honest man, show it now, or be hanged."

The great event of 1609 to Arbella, however, was what amounted to a state progress she made during August and September through many of the English counties; and of this we can follow almost every step, thanks to the carefully kept account book of her steward, Mr. Hugh Crompton, a faithful servant of whom we shall hear much later. She left Whitehall on Tuesday, the 22nd August, and 3s. 4d. were "given this daye at the garden gate at Whitehall to the poore as my Ladie tooke hir coache to come into the country"; and she supped and slept the first night at St. Albans. Of her expenses here a quaint list is given: "Soper £2 8s. 6d.; breakfast £2 11s. 10d.; horse mete for 20 horses £2 2s. 6d.; hostellers 2s. 0d.; musitions 10s.; poore at the gates 10s.; ringers 10s.; chamblens 5s.; my La. Arrondale's (Arundel's) coatchman £1; a trompeter 2s. 6d.; the poore on the way back to St. Albans and Toddington 4s. 11d." The next stop was at Lady Cheney's house at Toddington, near Dunstable, and here she had some clothes washed and gave 10s. to the "landy woman," besides over £7 to grooms, bakers, butlers, cooks, yeomen, porters, "boyes in the kitchen, Clerke of the kitchen, and a woman wayted on the chamber." Small wonder that money flew when one night's stay required such lavish reward, but Arbella was the King's kinswoman, and her position had to be maintained. On the 26th August she was at Northampton, the next night at Prestwood, and so through Nottingham (where 4s. was spent on cake and ale at the alehouse), to Mansfield, where my Lady Bowes' "cocheman" came to meet her, and had £1 for his trouble, and 1s. for "my Lady Bowes' coach-horses meat attending my La. coming there." The schoolmaster also presented her with some verses, and was rewarded with 6s. At Glapwell the "spring tree of the coach" had to be mended at a cost of 6d.; and Arbella graciously spent the time in buying three and a half yards of crimson baize for a petticoat at 3s. 4d. a yard: and finally she reached Walton Hall, Chesterfield, the residence of her friend Lady Bowes, where she remained till the 2nd

September. Several of her horses needed attention; 1s. each was paid for shoeing "Bay Briton, Bay Fenton, the spotted nag, and the sumpter horses"; while the "ould coach mare" stayed three days in Chesterfield to "be dressed of a foote she was pricked," and 1s. 6d. was charged for her hay. While Arbella was at Walton Hall, my Lord of Rutland sent his "musions" to amuse her, and she gave them £1 for their performance; and another pound to the Mayor and Brethren of Chesterfield, who brought her a present; while when she left she gave £2 to the poor of Chesterfield, and nearly £7 to Lady Bowes' Steward to be distributed in the house.

From Walton Hall Arbella travelled to Sheffield, and here, since she came in state and not merely as the Earl's niece, great preparations had long been on foot to welcome her. On the 29th August Gilbert, being then at Tankyrsley, wrote to his Steward: "Harry Butler,—Tell Richard the cook I would have him stay at Sheffield until I come thither, which shall be, God willing, to-morrow at night. Tell Moorhouse that my Lady Arbella will be at Sheffield some day this week, as I verily think. Fish enough must be watered: for there will be an extreme great number in the hall every day. Fat beef and fat muttuns must be had, and the beef in time killed and powdered. Fat capons provided and reserved till then, and everything else that either Richard or Moorhouse can provide or think useful; and Wyngfield's best advice to be had and followed. So in extreme haste I end. Send away this letter to be safely delivered to Leigh, speedily, wheresoever he be, for it requireth great haste. Send this other letter to Sir Charles this day also. . . . G. Sh."

Whilst at Sheffield, Arbella wrote to Lord Salisbury to thank him for his promised influence in obtaining her the Irish monopolies she had requested, and at the same time her uncle wrote that "My Lady Arbella hath been pleased to impart unto me the honourable and favourable care that she hath found in your Lordship in her occasions, and particularly in that suit of hers touching the wines in Ireland, being so full of all due thankfulness for it, as I must need obey her commandment by presenting my best

thanks to your Lordship from my poor self also for the same. I perceive her Ladyship doubteth that this same suit of hers for wines, and aqua vitæ, and usquebagh, called also Irish wines, will receive some cross in Ireland, for that the same law of restraint of beer and ale are not there that are here, and therefore beseecheth that your Lordship will grant her furthermore for the King's Majesty's Letters, that by precedents from our laws here, prohibition by judgment of State may be made there, and this noble Lady to have the licensing, the brewing, and the sales of them; as an addition to that good that is so honourably intended by your Lordship to her."

To Sheffield also Sir Charles Cavendish sent over his "musition" to play before his niece, who rewarded the man with £1; and she gave £2 to Mr. Tuke "for a sermon he made by my Ladies command;" and 30s. to Sir Peter Fretchvile's keeper for a stag killed in Staveley Park, near Chesterfield, and sent after her. Money was given too to poor women who brought her fruit; and when she left Sheffield her departure was not final, as she meant to stay there again on her return journey. Her next destination was Melwood Park, the residence of Sir George St. Paul, but many difficulties had to be encountered before it was reached. Half a mile out of Stockwith the road was so broken that three men had to be sent for to mend it, before the coach could pass; and this took so long that it was almost dark before the party came anywhere near Melwood, and then nobody was sure of the road. "A man of Mr. Northe's came to guide the gentlewmen that night to Melwood," records Crompton; and he was paid 2s. 6d. for his trouble, while 3s. 6d. was given for "a boat to pass the stuff (baggage) in the coach from Beautrie (Bawtry) to Melwood by water in the night." Melwood was the furthest point of Arbella's progress, and she stayed there four days, and bought a coach horse from Sir Gervase Clifton for £20. Some letters had been sent to her by mistake at Welbeck, Charles Cavendish's place, and a man of Lord Shrewsbury's brought them over to her while she was at Melwood; she had too a present of a stag brought by Sir Edward

Swifte's keeper. All the time she was there, men were diligently at work mending the highway between Melwood and Stockwith, and she paid 13*s.* for it; but when the time came for her to return, she preferred after all to go by boat down the river at a cost of £1.

Arbella left Melwood on the 13th September for Worksop Priory, Notts, and distributed 15*s.* 6*d.* to poor people on the way. She had ordered some spices to be sent to her here, and "a mayde brought my La. a present from Sir Bryan Lassells"; but she only stayed two nights, and then drove on to Aston near Sheffield, the seat of John, Lord Darcy, for one night more. To the servants and the poor at Aston she distributed considerably over £7; and her next journey, to Chatsworth and Buxton, seems to have been a very difficult and expensive one. Crompton's account book has: "Given to a footman of the Lord Darsey's came to guide part of the way that day to Chatsworth, 10*s.* 6*d.* To two guides more that same day on the moors to Chatsworth, 6*s.* To a Farier for bludding and drenching Freake's nagg sicke of the staggars, 3*s.* For mending the sompter saddle and long rein to lead him, 2*s.* For the sompters and 6 men attending the same from Walton to Buxtone lying shorte one night. Their charges spent of themselves and their horses came to 9*s.* 6*d.*" Sunday the 17th was spent at Chatsworth; £6 5*s.* went in tips to the servants there, and next day Arbella proceeded to Buxton. She tried the waters here, gave £1 to "him that kept the well," 6*s.* to his man, and another £1 to two women who attended her, besides 13*s.* 4*d.* to the poor on leaving: and so, on the 20th September she returned again to Sheffield. Lord Shrewsbury sent two guides to bring her across the moors from Buxton to Sheffield; but the going was so rough that her coach broke down, and she had to alight, and deigned to drink some ale while "certen laborers mended the wayes that day on the mores," and got 5*s.* for it; and 10*d.* was paid for "a roape the same time to bind the coatche." Fortunately Lord Pembroke's coach was available, and in this Arbella continued her journey, and was welcomed in passing through Sheffield

by the pealing of the church bells. Her own coach followed ignominiously behind, tied up with rope, but she only afterwards paid 10s. for mending it, and 2s. 6d. for the harness, which hardly sounds extravagant.

Whilst here, Sir George St. Paul sent over another coach horse she had ordered from Melwood for £20, and she gave £1 to the man who brought it; while many other curious little expenses are noted too: 5s. to the gardener for "certen noseгаies he gave my La.,"; 5s. to a piper, 5s. to "a man of Mrs. Digbie's brought my La. certen preserves"; 10s. to "a poore woman gave my La. a petition in her coatche the day she came thence to Roughford" (Rufford); 5s. to "a man brought and delivered my La. a pair of small sheeres the same time in her coatche." This expedition to Rufford, which Arbella made with her aunt Lady Shrewsbury on the 25th, was somewhat in the nature of a pious pilgrimage; for it was at the church here that her unfortunate young parents had been married. She spent a night at the house of George Markham, Esq., gave £5 to the servants there, and went on to Wingfield, between Chesterfield and Derby, every inch of the ground here recalling the days of her early childhood. At Wingfield she stopped another night, and gave nearly £10 in tips, besides 10s. to a servant of Sir Richard Harper's, who brought her "a letter and certen wrytings in a box." On the 28th September she drove through Derby, but did not stay there, and went for the night to Mr. Farnham's house, Quarndon, near Loughborough. A carrier named Taylor met her in Derby with letters for her from London, and she paid him 2s.; and gave besides over £5 to "the poore of the towne of Derby as my La. passed that way," and another £5 to Mr. Farnham's servants. The next day she went on to Market Harborough, and 1s. was paid "for ale my La. dranke" on the way; £5 "for my La. and her companies one night at Harborow," and £2 9s. 7d. for "horsmet ther for 26 horses one night." Lord Shrewsbury had sent litter-men and horses to wait for her at Wellingborough, but she does not seem to have needed them there, but sent them 19s. 6d. for waiting two

nights and a day for her, with instructions to go on to Wrest. She stayed two nights at Sir Christopher Yelverton's house, Easton Manduit, near Wellingborough, dining one day at Sir Edmund Conquest's Lodge; and Sir Christopher then lent her a man to guide her to Wrest Park, the Earl and Countess of Kent's house, where it will be remembered she found a refuge after her disastrous quarrel with her grandmother in 1603. She had always been very fond of the Kents, and one of the first uses she had made of her favour with the new King had been to support the Earl's suit for his Ruthin estates in 1604; "for the which," wrote he; "as for many her other most honourable favours I am and ever will be most thankful unto her for the same." Before arriving at Wrest on the 4th October, "the coachman had his legg broke," and was awarded £2 in compensation; and "the lytter men in reward for their paines" got £3, besides 13s. 2d. "for their charge lying two nights at the towne at Wrest, as may appeare by their bill." From Wrest Arbella travelled through Toddington to St. Albans, where "soper and dyner" cost £8 15s. 6d., and "horsmet for XXtie of my La. and X of Sir Henry Gray's" horses ran to £2 9s. 4d. : in addition to which 10s. was given to a footman "who brought worde" that Lady Arundel, Arbella's young cousin Alethea, was "brought bedde of a son." On the 10th October Arbella was back again at Broad Street; and this journey, which occupied less than two months and cost her about £350, marks a distinct turning point in her life. Hitherto, if often lonely and despised, and never permitted to make choice of her own way of life, Arbella had seldom experienced any very vivid desire to adopt another, and had been content enough to fill the rather colourless part assigned to her at the Courts of both Elizabeth and James. But after this journey, her mind seems to turn with a rather weary longing towards the tranquil joys of a home, however humble, of her own : she thought deeply upon the ways and means which could make such a dream possible, and in her changed and changing state of mind a new and great emotion suddenly assailed and mastered her with overwhelming force.

Through the autumn her need of money grew more and more embarrassing. Salisbury had during the summer promised her his influence in her suit for the wine-selling in Ireland, which practically meant that she was certain to obtain it, but all these matters took time; the King was much away, and she herself not so prominently in his eye or in his favour as before. On the 2nd November a letter appears in the Doquet Book from Sir Thomas Lake to the Lord Deputy of Ireland, bidding him "Cause a graunte under the great Seale of that Realme to be made to the Lady Arbella Stewart, her Deputyes and Assignees, wheareby they for 21 yeares shall have privilege to nominate such persons as shall sell wynes of any sorte, aqua vitæ, or usquebagh within that kingdom. According to a Mynute entered at Large in the private Signet booke, dated the 2nd of November"; but by the 17th of December this had not yet been confirmed. On that date Arbella wrote to Lord Salisbury in somewhat harassed manner: "My honourable good Lord,—I having been a long suitor, as your lordship knows, whose honourable favour, I humbly thank you, I have found from time to time, I am now advised by some friends of mine, of good judgment and experience, to procure the Great Seal of England to my book. Both because it will be a furtherance to a speedier despatch of this suit in Ireland, and that this business must be done and executed by deputation, which cannot be done without the Great Seal were first obtained, with which also the book may receive alteration and a check there. Therefore I humbly beseech your lordship that by your favour, on which only I rely, I may obtain the Great Seal of England to the book herewith presented to your lordship. For whose honour and happiness I pray, and so humbly take my leave. From Puddle Wharf, the 17th December, 1609. Your lordship's much bounden poor friend, Arbella Stuart."

The signature it will be noted has changed from the calm "Your lordships much bounden and assured friend" of her August letter; and other indications are not wanting of an impatience, a loosening of interest in these sordid

necessities, and a profound distaste for the foolish and extravagant Court life, together with a firm desire to pay all debts, retire from town, and pursue henceforth a quieter and more sober existence. It is evident she had been making inquiries on the subject of country residences, and had expressed something of her wish to her friend Isabel, Lady Bowes, with whom she had stayed at Walton Hall, near Chesterfield. There is a letter from Lady Bowes among the Harleian papers, hitherto unnoticed by biographers, dated the 5th December, 1609, and addressed "To the right noble and moste worthie Ladie, the Lady Arbella, these bee"; in which allusion is plainly made to these inquiries, although it seems as if no immediate hurry were anticipated in settling the matter. "Excellent Lady," the letter runs, "I humbly thank you that you would bee pleased to remember me by your letter. I did hope I should have seen your Ladyship in that place before this tyme, but some occasion fell out to hinder my coming upp for a while: I would be glad to heare howe your Ladyship proceeds in your Irish suit, but I long more to heare how you keepe you health this wett winter. I did not forget to write to my brother St. Poole (St. Paul?), to know what house, or when it shall bee fitted for your Ladyship, but I have received no certain answer yett, but I will not fail to bring your Ladyship one myself: for I hope ere it be long to wait on you there, if the days would grow a little longer for travell: in the mean tyme ever I cannot forget to pray for your Ladyship's health and happiness, acknowledging myself more bounde to your Ladyship and for your manifoulde favoures than to all the World besydes, and soe humbly take my leave, but will never leave to love and honour your Ladyship, and so ever reste Your honour's in all things, Isabell Bowes."

Very shortly after Arbella's letter to Salisbury of the 17th December, she had an interview with him, at which she suddenly stated that she had entirely changed her mind as to her wishes, and was now prepared to renounce the grant of the Irish wines if she might instead have all her debts paid. She also hinted that she would be grateful

could the King increase her allowance to such a sum as would reasonably support her; and further that she would prefer a thousand a year in money to the "diet" allowance from the royal table. All this very plainly pointed to a drastic change in her arrangements, and Salisbury, considerably startled, begged her to set down her requests in writing, which she did thus: "Dec. 1609. Where your lordship willed me to set down a note of those three things wherein I lately moved you, they are these: The first, that I am willing to return back His Majesty's gracious grant to me of the wines in Ireland, so as your lordship will take order for the paying of my debts, when I shall upon my honour inform you truly what they are. The next, that His Majesty will be graciously pleased to augment my allowance in such sort as I may be able to live in such honour and countenance hereafter as may stand with His Majesty's honour and my own comfort. And lastly, that His Majesty doth now allow me a diet, that he will be pleased, instead thereof, to let me have one thousand pounds yearly. Some other things I will presume to entreat your lordship's like favour in that they may stand me in stead; but, for that they are such as I trust your lordship will think His Majesty will easily grant, I will now forbear to set them down. Your lordship's poor friend, Arbella Stuart."

CHAPTER XIV

L'AMOUR DE LA TRENTAINE

(*January–July, 1610*)

A FEW days later Arbella was suddenly arrested, and on the 30th December Chamberlain writes, “ I can learn no more of the Lady Arbella, but that she is committed to the Lady Knyvett, and was yet again before the Lords. Her gentleman usher and her waiting-woman are close prisoners since her restraint.”

It may well be imagined how the tongues of the Court gossips wagged over Arbella's downfall. In her gentle way she had been always a little disdainful of their follies and frivolities, a little inclined to sit apart to read and dream, until they resentfully supposed her indifferent to their praise or blame; and now that she stood pilloried as a sinner, delicious was the excitement of speculating as to her sin. Many believed it a matter of phenomenal debts, and desperate and questionable measures to raise money: but many more felt certain it was a love affair, of course accompanied by disgraceful circumstances. The disgrace did not last long, for on the 13th February Chamberlain writes again: “ The Lady Arbella's business, whatsoever it is, is ended, and she restored to her former state and grace. The King gave her a cupboard of plate better than £200 for a New Year's gift, and a thousand marks to pay her debts, besides some yearly addition to her income. Want being thought the chiefest cause of her discontentment, though she be not altogether free from the suspicion of being collapsed.” All this did not, however, put an end to the gossip about the unfortunate lady. “ Collapsed ” is a word that might be held to mean many things; that Arbella was thought to be mad, that

she had become a Roman Catholic, or that she had surrendered to a lover. The last guess was nearest the truth, but there was no dishonour in it. Judging from what we now know, there seems little doubt that in the end of 1609 Arbella wished to marry. The rearrangement of her finances, the desire to renounce her "diet allowance" and her last grant in preference for a settled income and the payment of her debts, her inquiries through Lady Bowes concerning country houses, and most significant of all, her hint to Salisbury as to "some other things . . . but, for that they are such as I trust your lordship will think His Majesty will easily grant, I will now forbear to set them down"; all point in the one direction. It was a very reasonable wish, and it is evident that she desired no great match, but merely to retire to the country with the man of her choice, and to spend the remainder of her life in the sympathetic companionship of one with whom she had almost every taste in common. In fact, tardily but irrevocably, the great romance of Arbella's life had dawned.

She was now thirty-five, but under much repression had developed slowly; and in spite of her many suitors, her heart, with the exception of that brief and hopeless passion for Essex, had never yet been really touched. The man who had now won it was twelve years her junior, but old for his age and of a studious disposition; "loving his book above all other exercise . . . of very good parts, conversant both in the Latin and Greek languages, and of a clear courage." It is easy to understand the appeal of such a nature to this woman already growing so deeply weary of the witless buffoonery which passed for gaiety at her cousin's Court. Strange enough too, the lover she had chosen was William Seymour, second son of Lord Beauchamp, and the very youth concerning marriage with whom she had in desperation written to his grandfather, old Lord Hertford, from Hardwick seven years before. William was then a schoolboy and the merest name to her; social and political independence were all she needed. She considered, rightly enough, that Hertford had at

that time betrayed her confidence, and she had been upon no friendly terms with him or with his son ever since, in spite of the fact that their position at the new Court was now a fully assured one. The old Earl's long endeavours to have the legitimacy of his son officially acknowledged would never have met with success in Elizabeth's time, but after her death he renewed his suit, which was granted by James in 1608, and Lord Beauchamp was pronounced his legitimate heir with entail to his eldest son Edward, and after him to his second son William. Both young men had been educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, and had taken their degrees of B.A. in December 1607, after which they joined their father at Court, where Arbella made their acquaintance. They were now aged twenty-five and twenty-three respectively; they had a younger brother Francis, and a sister Honora, afterwards married to Sir Ferdinand Dudley. Tradition has it that William, immersed in study, remained at Oxford, and that it was only when the Court came to Woodstock that he met Arbella; but though this is quite possible, we have no particular proof of it. In any case the lady's hatred for old Hertford was not extended to his grandson; and though marriage had not yet been spoken of, a warm liking seems to have sprung up between them. She must have felt sufficiently sure of his regard for her in December 1609, when she asked Salisbury's help in all the changes she wished made in her affairs: but it is evident that when she began to tell the King of those "some other things" at which she had hinted to the great minister, James leapt to the conclusion that marriage for Arbella could only mean alliance with some European prince, and he instantly had her arrested, and forbade her to consider any such proposal.

His reading of the situation and that of all his Court, is probably well enough represented in the gossiping letter of La Boderie, the French Ambassador, to his master; in which it is distinctly stated that Arbella wished to marry the Prince of Moldavia, and that during the last four or five months she had turned from a strict Puritan to a

high Catholic. She was arrested late in the evening, says La Broderie, examined for three hours before the Council, and then sent, strictly guarded, to her own apartments, where no one was allowed to visit her. Naturally he did not fail to deduce scandalous suggestions from these details, but the whole story serves only to show how very little was really known of Arbella's character by those amongst whom she spent her life. She herself, however, kept her head wonderfully at this juncture. Having named no names, and realizing her cousin's mistake, she hastened to use it to her own advantage, gave him her solemn promise never to marry a foreigner, and received in return his full permission to take as husband any man she pleased, so long as he was a loyal subject of the realm. She did not immediately tell him that her choice was already made, but she seems to have felt honestly assured of her liberty henceforth to make and announce it whensoever she chose. One subject family only would James have omitted had he thought of it, for the Hertford claim to the crown was as good as if not better than Arbella's own; but she had always shown so great a dislike to Lord Hertford and all his family that this seemed quite unnecessary. She exerted herself to please the King at this interview, and was restored to greater favour than she had enjoyed for some time. It seemed wise, however, not to press now for the changes she had desired, but to accept gratefully the warrant for her diet, which was signed on the 20th January, an addition of £600 a year to her income, £200 worth of plate for a New Year's gift, and a thousand marks to pay her debts. This was generous treatment from James; and in addition to it the grant to sell wines in Ireland was still pushed diligently forward. A curious note from Sir Thomas Lake to Lord Salisbury concerning the signing of the above warrant shows how very vague were all the Court arrangements and favours, how easily the King might have been cheated into signing any grant twice over, and on the other hand, how entirely it was at his mercy at any time to refuse its renewal altogether. The note is also interesting as alluding to the manner in which

Arbella had of late withdrawn herself as much as possible from society.

“Royston, 20th January, 1609–10 . . . At the signing of Lady Arbella’s Warrant His Majestie was as nice as in ye matter of the powder, because your Lo. sayd in your letter it was an extraordinary, and wold not be perswaded but that she had a dyett before, or an allowance for dyett. My best answer was that I thought she had never had dyett but in the Queen’s presence, and that because she had not frequented that it was suppressed long since. And that now, considering she had a chamber messe before of fowre dishes, this being an addition but of six, if then the present dyett was ceased (as I tooke it) His Majestie would save by it. Whether I reckon right or no, I cannot tell, but His Majestie pleased to signe it.”

Arbella and her young lover dared now to be more explicit with one another. On the 2nd February William Seymour entered his lady’s room, and they spoke openly of their love, and seem to have gone through some ceremony of formal betrothal. Within the next few days they had two more meetings at the houses of friends, but believing James to have promised his consent to her union, Arbella made little secret of it at the Court, and suddenly both she and Seymour were again arrested and sent before the Privy Council. On the 15th February, Beaulieu, Sir Thomas Edmonde’s secretary, writing to Trumbull, the British Resident at Brussels, says : “The Lady Arbella, who (as you know) was not long ago censured for having without the King’s privity, entertained a motion of marriage, was again within these few days apprehended in the like treaty with the Lorð of Beauchamp’s second son, and both were called and examined yesterday at the Court about it. What the matter will prove I know not, but these affectations of marriage in her do give some advantage to the world of impairing the reputation of her constant and virtuous disposition.”

William Seymour presents a character of curious con-

trasts, sometimes audacious to recklessness, at others actuated by a caution that was almost cowardly. The latter was no doubt natural in a descendant of Lord Hertford, while the former came through his inheritance of Tudor blood. He seems to have been genuinely attached to Arbella, and indeed there is no reason why he should not have been, for all agree in describing her as charming, graceful, good, clever, virtuous, and intelligent; it is true she was not rich, but she occupied an important position at Court, and many great princes had sued for her hand in vain. She was at no pains to conceal the warmth of her feeling for him, and it is in fact likely that no man had ever dared to speak openly of love to her before, and that the ardent outpouring of the young man's passion woke an answering fervour in herself; but whilst at her age love, once roused, will last for ever, at his it is more easily diverted by obstacles and cooled by circumstances. Arrest came somewhat as a shock to the young lover, and he was quickly persuaded that both for Arbella's sake and his own, his wisest course was to make his "submission" as soon as possible. On the 20th February, therefore, he signed the following letter:—

“ To the Right Honourable my most singular good Lords, the Lords of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council.

“ May it please your good Lordships : Since it is your pleasure, which to me shall always stand for law, that I should truly relate under my hand those passages which have been between the noble Lady Arbella and myself, I do here, in these rugged lines, truly present the same to your Lordships' favourable censure, that thereby his most excellent Majesty may, by your Lordships, be fully satisfied of my duty and faithful allegiance (which shall ever be a spur to me to expose my life and all my fortunes to the extremest dangers for his Highness' service), and that I will never attempt anything which I shall have certain foreknowledge will be displeasing to him.

“ I do therefore humbly confess that when I conceived that noble lady might, with His Majesty's good favour,

and no just offence, make her choice of any subject within this kingdom, which conceit was begotten in me upon a general report, after her ladyship last being called before your Lordships that it might be; myself being a younger brother, and sensible of mine own good, unknown to the world, of mean estate, not born to challenge anything by my birthright, and therefore my fortunes to be raised by mine own endeavours, and she a lady of great honour and virtue, and, as I thought, of great means, I did plainly and honestly endeavour lawfully to gain her in marriage, which is God's ordinance common to all, assuming myself, if I could effect the same with His Majesty's most gracious favour and liking (without which I resolved never to proceed), that thence would grow the first beginning of all my happiness; and therefore I boldly intruded myself into her ladyship's chamber in the court on Candlemas Day last, at what time I imparted my desire unto her; which was entertained, but with this caution on either part, that both of us resolved not to proceed to any final conclusion without His Majesty's most gracious favour and liking first obtained; and this was our first meeting. After that we had a second meeting at Mr. Bugg's his house, in Fleet Street; and then a third at Mr. Baynton's; at both which we had the like conference and resolution as before. And the next day save one after the last meeting, I was convented before your Lordships, when I did then deliver as much as now I have written; both then and now protesting before God, upon my duty and allegiance to his most excellent Majesty, and as I desire to be retained in your Lordships' good opinions, there is neither promise of marriage, contract, or any other engagement whatsoever between the lady and myself, nor ever was any marriage by me or her intended, unless His Majesty's gracious favour and approbation might have been first gained therein, which we resolved to obtain before we would proceed to any final conclusion, Whereof I humbly beseech your Lordships to inform His Majesty that by your good means, joined to the clearness of an unspotted conscience, and a loyal heart to his Highness,

I may be acquitted in his just judgment from all opinion of any disposition in me to attempt anything distasteful or displeasing to His Majesty, as one well knowing that the just wrath and disfavour of my sovereign will be my confusion, whereas his gracious favour and goodness towards me may be the advancement of my poor fortunes. And thus, my Lords, according to your commands, I have made a true relation of what was required, humbly referring the favourable construction thereof to your Lordships, having, for the further hastening of the truth, and ever to bind me thereunto, hereafter subscribed my name the 20th of February, 1609 (-10).

“WILLIAM SEYMOUR.”

At the same time Arbella wrote to the King begging for her release, and accompanied the petition with a letter to the Lords of the Council, requesting their intercession for her. It is noticeable that in neither of these did she deny anything of the solemnity of her compact, but whether she may have been hurt or not by Seymour's attitude, her indignant rebuke when later he was accused of faithlessness in her presence, should be remembered. “He did no more,” said she, “than Abraham and Isaac, who both disclaimed their wives for a time.” In after life Seymour showed himself a brave and gallant gentleman, one of the most faithful adherents of Charles I in his misfortunes, compelling admiration even from his enemies; and one would therefore gladly believe his overprudence in this matter to have been dictated by a sincere consideration for Arbella's welfare rather than a cowardly desire to save his own skin. For the time his protestations were successful. James was assured that no harm had been intended, and both offenders were set free. But Arbella meant that the marriage should still take place, and Seymour was doubtful as to its expediency. A curious letter, discovered by Canon Jackson among the Longleat papers, unsigned but addressed to Arbella, is very evidently an attempt on Seymour's part to induce her to break the engagement. “I am come,” it runs, “with a message to

your ladyship, which was delivered unto me in the presence of this gentleman your servant, and therefore your ladyship may be assured I will neither add nor diminish, but will truly relate unto you what he hath directed me to do, which is this. He hath seriously considered of the proceedings between your ladyship and himself, and doth well perceive, if he should go on therein, it would not only prove exceedingly prejudicial to your contentment, but extreme dangerous to him, first in regard of the inequality of degrees between your ladyship and him, next the King's Majesty's pleasure and commandment to the contrary, which neither your ladyship nor himself did ever intend to neglect. He doth, therefore, humbly desire your ladyship, since the proceeding that is past doth not tie him nor your ladyship to any necessity, but that you may freely commit each other to your best fortunes, that you would be pleased to desist from your intended resolution concerning him, who likewise resolveth not to trouble you any more in this kind, not doubting but your ladyship may have one more fitting for your degree (he having already presumed too high), and himself a meaner match with more security."

The coldness and the avowal of mercenary motives in Seymour's letter to the Council might easily be explained by his anxiety to minimize the importance of the affair, to let the King suppose his cousin's feelings had not been really engaged, and then when all had blown over, perhaps to make a runaway match of it; but Arbella could scarcely deceive herself as to the sentiments by which this private letter was inspired. Nevertheless, she seems to have done so. She believed Seymour was afraid of bringing disaster upon her, and she scorned such fears; love was worth every risk, she held, and she never doubted his feelings to be a whit less true and ardent than her own. It would be wise certainly to do nothing for some time: James in some kindly moment might relent, agree to their desires, and keep his promise to her: at any rate he must be humoured out of his wrath for the present. If all else failed, they could marry secretly later on and take the

consequences, which (for James had always been kind to her) she did not seriously believe would be very terrible. So for a time they settled to see but little of one another, and Arbella returned with what gay grace she might to the Court life she so hated.

On the 31st March the grant for which she had so long wished, to sell wines and usquebagh in Ireland for the next twenty-one years, was passed, apparently by her wish, in favour of Sir George St. Paul, Kt., and Mr. Yelverton. These two gentlemen had applied for the permission at the same time as herself, and since they were friends of hers, and she had stayed in both their houses during her progress the preceding summer, it is probable that they had arranged the matter thus together, since she also was to reap some benefit from the arrangement. The allusions to her in the document are all in the highest praise. "A personage of extraordinarie ranke and estimation, as is the Lady Arbella Stuarthe, neere in bloode, and in especialle grace and favoure with His Highnesse . . . this noble Lady." Evidently Arbella had played her cards well with the King, whose warmest favour she now once more enjoyed. James was not a far-sighted man, and he believed the affair with young Seymour entirely at an end, but he was the only person at Court who did so. He had hoped that all was hushed up at the time, and that nobody had heard of it beyond himself and his Council, but quite sufficient had leaked out, and plenty of gossip and conjecture still obtained upon the subject. People wrote to ask Salisbury if it were true, and apparently by the King's instructions he denied everything. There is a letter to him from Lord Dunfermline at Edinburgh, dated the 31st March, thanking him for tidings of Arbella, and adding: "We have much talk of her business here, but indeed, amongst divers rumours of that matter . . . the most constant reporte we had here was of her intention to have married a younger son of Lord Beauchamp. This was written by sundry there, and by some who might have seemed to have responsible knowledge and intelligence of Arbella's affairs—a great argument not to give trust to

reports in matters of importance, for on light conjecture and weak ground strong assertions will be builded and go far ahead."

The King having been thus lulled into believing all once more secure, the next move was for Seymour to make. After two or three months' consideration, his fit of unnatural caution had passed; and, his admiration for the gracious princess who had deigned to stoop to him burning more ardently than ever, he was persuaded that his troth to her was of more serious importance than the promise wrung from him by the Council. He determined, therefore, at all costs, since she was still willing, to make her his wife. Seymour's point of view is not after all very difficult to understand. Brought up by his grandfather in an absolute terror of the royal displeasure, he had yet almost identically repeated that grandfather's fault; and when his action was instantly followed by arrest and examination before the Council, it must have seemed to him that he and Arbella were on the verge of suffering even such a miserable martyrdom as old Hertford and Katherine Grey. Seymour was only twenty-three, and a promising career lay before him. Naturally he did not relish the thought of spending the best years of his life eclipsed in the Tower; but he may also have been no less awake to Arbella's welfare, nor less anxious to avert from her so dreary a fortune as had been the unhappy Katherine's. These considerations were quite sufficient to give him pause at the first arrest, and even to inspire his letter to Arbella; but now, her courage still running so high, and the King's affection for her so lavishly displayed, it did not appear unreasonable to suppose that all might yet be well. Something must be risked of course. James could not be expected, after his first anger, so to contradict himself as to give open consent to the marriage; but once it had taken place, remonstrance would soon blow over, and the couple would be allowed to retire, which was all they asked, to some quiet country spot. Seymour's spirits rose buoyantly once more. Adventure always attracts the young, and a secret marriage with a royal lady promised plenty of it.

He had a cousin named Edward Rodney, a quick-witted youth much disliked by old Hertford, who considered him dangerous and subversive, but who to Seymour was the very man needed in this affair. Afterwards, when all came out and Rodney was examined in his share of the plot, he made a full declaration, of which he signed the following abstract, which explains with probably fair precision how far he had been trusted in it; but since he was naturally anxious to excuse himself as much as possible, it is likely that he considerably minimized the part he played. From what one gathers, he was a fairly unscrupulous young man, who would stick at little; and Seymour would hardly have asked his help had he been really the lamblike and innocent individual he here tries to represent himself.

The Declaration runs as follows: "About Whitsuntide meeting with Mr. Seymour at Lambeth, amongst other speech which he used to me, it pleased him to acquaint me with his resolution concerning his marriage, but so sparingly and in such general terms, that he never spake unto me of the means, which he used in the reobtaining her love, nor once mentioned unto me either Letter, Token, Message or ought else which had passed between them, only that since it pleased her to entertain the matter, having the King's consent to make her own Choice without exception, and since he found himself bound in conscience by reason of a former pledging of his faith unto her, that he resolutely intended it, engaging me by Oath unto him that I should not reveal it, until he absolved me, and seeming to me to fear no other Lett or Obstacle than his grandfather my lord of Hertford. From that time till the marriage day, he used no more words to me concerning it, at what time he requested me to accompany him to her chamber at Greenwich, to be a witness of his marriage there to be solemnised, to which I consented, all this while nothing doubting of the King's Consent."

The marriage, itself, however, could not take place for some time after Seymour first spoke of it to his cousin. Whitsuntide that year fell upon the 27th May, and in the

beginning of June Arbella was required to take part in the magnificent festivities given to celebrate the creation of Prince Henry as Prince of Wales. Henry was now seventeen, and a greater favourite with the Court and people even than before; he was also still much attached to Arbella; and since it was most important that she should retain the good graces of all who might stand her friends in adversity, it would have been highly unwise to risk marriage at this juncture, and perhaps disturb all the elaborate rejoicings devised for the occasion. A hundred years had passed since the creation of the last Prince of Wales, afterwards Henry VIII, whose son Edward VI had ascended the throne when only nine years old, and had never enjoyed the earlier honour; and nothing, therefore, was now spared that could possibly add significance and glory to so illustrious a pageant. The rejoicings began with the public entry of the young prince into London by water. He landed on May 31st at the Queen's private landing stage at Westminster, whence steps led straight to the royal apartments in the Palace, and to the Whitehall Chamber, at this time used as House of Lords. Here he was received by the royal family; but the Investiture proper did not take place till the 4th June. It is enthusiastically described in a letter to Mr. Trumbull by John Finnett, who afterwards became Master of the Ceremonies at James' Court, and already showed great aptitude for the part. The ceremony at Westminster, he said, was a most stately one, and after it, all went by water to Whitehall, where the King dined in private, but the Prince in the great Hall, and music was played throughout dinner. "Next day was given a most glorious Masque, which was double. In the first part came in the little Duke of York between two great sea-slaves, the chiefest of Neptune's servants, attended by twelve little ladies, all daughters of Earls or Barons." One slave made a speech to explain the Masque, the other handed York a sword worth twenty thousand crowns to give Prince Henry, which being done and he returned to the stage, "the little ladies danced to the amazement of the beholders considering the tender-

ness of their years. These slight skirmishers having done their devoir, in came the princesses, first the Queen, then the Lady Elizabeth's Grace, then the Lady Arbella, and the Countesses": and the children's Masque being over, one presumes they were sent to bed. Charles, Duke of York, though now ten years old, was still extremely delicate, but a charming and attractive little boy. William Seymour must almost certainly have been present at this performance, and one wonders if the memory of it came back to him that bitter February day in 1649, when he, one of the last faithful four, helped to carry the coffin of the White King up the snow-strewn steps of St. George's Chapel at Windsor. In spite of his weakness, "Baby Charles" had a fine spirit, loved sport and mischief, and adored his elder brother. A quaint little note he wrote to Henry from the country is given in Ellis's *Letters*:—

"Sir, Pleas your H, I doe keepe your haire in breath (and I have very good sport) I doe wish the King and you might see it. So longing to see you, I kisse your hands and rest Yours to be commanded, York.

"To his Hienesse."

The great Masque was given later in the evening, and this, says Finnett, was a "glorious sight." It was called "Tethy's Festival or the Queen's Wake," and had been written by Daniel, while the dresses for it were designed by Inigo Jones. So great was the crowd desirous of witnessing it that a rule had to be made permitting no lady in the audience to wear a hoop, by means of which a hundred extra seats became available. The Ambassadors of Spain, Venice and the Netherlands were all present. Arbella had played a part in many pageants, but this, her last, was perhaps the most magnificent, and surely the one in which her heart was least interested. The scene represented a wonderful sea-cave filled with glittering stalactites, all of which were composed of jewels, and in this cave reclined the Queen as Tethys, Queen of the Ocean. To her in procession came the nymphs of all the English rivers; Princess Elizabeth (who had now taken

her place at Court) representing the Thames, and Arbella the Trent. Arbella's gown, which cost £100,000—and one wonders if she ever paid for it—sounds extravagantly beautiful. “Her head tire was composed of shells and coral, and from a great *murex* shell in the form of the crest of an helm, hung a thin waving veil. The upper garments had the boddies of sky coloured taffataes, for lightness, all embroidered with maritime invention. Then had she a kind of half skirt of cloth of silver embroidered with gold, all of the ground work cut out for lightness, which hung down full, and cut in points. Underneath that came a base (of the same as was her body), beneath her knee. Her long skirt was wrought with lace, waved round about like a river, and on the banks sedge and seaweeds, all of gold. Her shoulders were all embroidered with the work of the short skirt of cloth of silver, and had cypress spangled, ruffed out, and fell in a ruff above the elbow. The under sleeves were all embroidered as the bodies. Her shoes were of satin, richly embroidered with the work of the short skirt” (Nichols). “By the time all was done,” writes Finnett, “it was high time to go to bed, for within half an hour the sun was not setting but rising. Howbeit a further time was to be spent in viewing and scrambling at one of the most magnificent banquets I have ever seen.”

This Masque was given on the 5th June, and soon after it the Court moved to Greenwich. On the night of the 21st, William Seymour and his friend Rodney followed in its train; after which, further happenings may be set down in the words of Seymour's own confession, signed by him little more than a week later.

“The Examination of Willyam Semar Esq, before the Lords of His Majesty's Privy Councel, the 8th of July, 1610. He confesseth that upon Friday was fortnight he was married unto the Lady Arbella at Greenwich, in the chamber of the said Lady Arbella there. That there was present one Blagew, son to the Dean of Rochester, who was the minister that married them; there were also present one Edward Rodné; Crompton, gent. usher to the Lady

Arbella; Edward Kyrton and Edward Reve; Mrs. Biron and Mrs. Bradshawe, two servants to the Lady Arbella. The marriage was on the Friday morning beforesaid, between four and five of the clock, but without any license, as he confesseth. He saith he came to Greenwich on the Thursday at night, about twelve of the clock, accompanied with the said Rodné and Kyrton, and did sit up in the Lady Arbella her chamber all the night until they were married."

Had fortune smiled upon her birth, Arbella might have been Queen of England in her own right; or by alliance, Duchess of Lennox, Duchess of Parma, Duchess of Holstein, Princess of Nassau, Queen of Poland, Queen of Spain, Queen of France, or even (by marriage with her cousin James) Queen of Great Britain. All of these unions had been proposed for her and all had passed her by, without drawing so much as one sigh of regret from herself. But now, long past the romance time of her girlhood, she laid all the garnered sweetness of her warm and tender nature in the hands of the man whom she so truly loved, plain Mr. William Seymour.

CHAPTER XV

PRISON

(*July 1610–March 1611*)

FRIDAY is held an unlucky day for weddings, and the 22nd June that year fell upon a Friday. But once man and wife, Arbella and Seymour both went quietly back to their duties at Court, and waited to see what fortune would bring them. It was not much. Their secret leaked out almost immediately, nobody knew exactly how, and perhaps the young couple themselves were not really very sorry. The storm had to be faced, and the sooner it was over the better.

On the 8th July both were once more arrested; and as Carleton wrote to Winwood, "The great match which was lately stolen betwix the Lady Arbella and young Beauchamp provides them both of safe lodgings: the lady close prisoner at Sir Thomas Parry's house at Lambeth, and her husband in the Tower." In addition to this, Crompton and Reeves were committed to the Marshalsea in Southwark, Blague was sent to the Gate House in Westminster, and every one concerned was called up for examination before the Council. James was very angry, and no wonder, for he felt that he had been deceived. But Arbella and her husband had expected all this, and were ready to meet it with patience: after everything had been thoroughly sifted, and the King's rage had had time to cool, they hoped to win his pardon, and slip quietly away to the country life to which they had so looked forward. It was a hateful and disturbing means of earning their happiness, but it seemed the only way; and James, unlike Elizabeth, had never shown himself inimical to marriage in the abstract. So far as Arbella was concerned, she had never denied the

contract of Candlemas, which to her was so binding that the actual marriage ceremony merely clinched it, and she had held herself Seymour's wife before God from that day; but Seymour had explicitly stated in writing that no such contract had taken place, holding perhaps all fair in love and war, and arguing also that if he had admitted the bond at that stage, it could still have been broken, but once the marriage ceremony was over, it could not. Nevertheless this double dealing had placed him in something of a dishonourable position, and roused a very just indignation in the King; and James, like all weak men, could be obstinate as a mule if he imagined advantage to have been taken of his good nature. However, the culprits went obediently to prison, and did not really suppose their punishment would last for very long.

Sir Thomas Parry, to whose safe keeping Arbella was committed, was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and his house was at Lambeth, described in Norden's *Survey* as, "A fair dwelling house, strongly built, of three stories high, and a fair staircase breaking out from it of nineteen feet square." It stood on the river Thames, and had a large garden, in which Arbella was permitted to walk: she also had her own set of apartments, was allowed certain of her own women to wait upon her, could correspond with her friends and have such books and amusements as she required; and on the whole her lot seems to have been by no means rigorous. The warrant sent to Parry runs: "After our very hearty commendations. Whereas it is thought fit that the Lady Arbella should be restrained of her liberty, and choice is made of you to receive her and lodge her in your house;—These are therefore to give you notice thereof, and to require you to provide convenient lodging for her to remain under your charge and custody, with one or two of her women to attend her, without access of any other person unto her until His Majesty's pleasure be further known. And this shall be unto you a sufficient warrant." It is signed by six members of the Council.

Seymour meanwhile went to the Tower, but he too was treated with no special severity. He was at first lodged

with Sir William Waad in the Lieutenant's Tower till a suitable set of apartments was made ready for him in St. Thomas's Tower over Traitors' Gate, looking out upon Raleigh's Walk on the inner side, and upon the river on the outer. These were extremely handsome rooms, but they had no furniture or hangings, which prisoners were expected to supply for themselves, as well as to contribute an allowance for their food. Seymour had no money of his own, but though he did not really suppose he should stay very long in the Tower, no young man was ever more determined to be comfortable. He demanded an allowance from his grandfather, and with the King's consent (for Lord Hertford dared not move without it), £50 a quarter was provided for his maintenance. Seymour then ordered Waad with an arrogance more suitable in gaoler than prisoner to purchase hangings for him, and according to the Tower accounts Waad got five handsome pieces of tapestry at £10 a piece from an upholsterer named Jennings. One of these Seymour cut right across the middle to fit above a fireplace; and as he had not yet paid for them, and in the end never did do so, Waad became furiously angry and refused to be responsible for any more purchases. "The Villain Waad," as Raleigh called him, who had been a cruel tyrant to many noble gentlemen imprisoned in the Tower under his Lieutenantship, seems to have met his match in William Seymour; who after this sent to Arbella's villa at Hackney and ordered everything he required—silver, linen, candlesticks, trenchers, kitchen necessities, etc.—to be sent up to him; and probably by her orders they were immediately despatched. Having thus provided himself with every possible luxury, this audacious young man took leave of the angry Lieutenant and entered into possession of his own quarters.

A great many famous and noble men were imprisoned in the Tower at this time, and Seymour no doubt came in contact with them all. But his thoughts seem only to have been for himself and his own comfort, and no warm fellowship of great souls in misfortune is recorded of him. A solitary anecdote, told of the Puritan minister Melville,

who four years before had been sent to the Tower for speaking disrespectfully of the altar in the Chapel Royal, redounds more to the cheerful spirit of the poor Puritan than to the courtesy of Seymour, whose rejoinder is not given, if indeed he felt sufficient interest to make one. Melville received him with the quaint quip,

“*Communis tecum mihi causa est carceris ; Ara-
Bella tibi causa est araque sacra mihi.*”

which has been rendered into English as—

“*From the same cause my woe proceeds as thine ;
Thy altar lovely is, and sacred mine.*”

Arbella meanwhile thought little of herself, much of her poor servants, and most of Seymour. She wrote many letters during her imprisonment, but since few of them are dated, their chronology can only be determined by their contents, and this is not always easy. Her plea to the King was probably the first she wrote, and in this it should be noticed that, rather than irritate him by mention of her married name, she signs her initials only, these being the same as before. An old saw has it that “*Change the name and not the letter, change for the worse and not the better*” ; and in poor Arbella’s case this seems to have been true enough. Here is the letter—

“*I do most heartily lament my hard fortune that I should offend your Majesty the least, especially in that whereby I have long desired to merit of your Majesty, as appeared before your Majesty was my Sovereign. And though your Majesty’s neglect of me, my good liking (love) of this gentleman that is my husband, and my fortune drew me to a contract before I acquainted your Majesty, I humbly beseech your Majesty to consider how impossible it was for me to imagine it could be offensive unto your Majesty, having few days before given me your Royal consent to bestow myself on any subject of your Majestys (which likewise your Majesty had done long since). Besides, never having been either prohibited any or spoken to for any in this land by your Majesty these 7 years that I have lived in your Majesty’s house, I could not conceive that*

your Majesty regarded my marriage at all; whereas if your Majesty had vouchsafed to tell me your mind and accept the freewill offering of my obedience, I could not have offended your Majesty, of whose gracious goodness I presume so much that if it were as convenient in a worldly respect as malice may make it seem to separate us whom God hath joined, your Majesty would not do evil that good might come thereof, nor make me, that have the honour to be so near your Majesty in blood, the first precedent that ever was, though our Princes may have left some as little imitable for so good and gracious a King as your Majesty, as David's dealing with Uriah. But I assure myself if it please your Majesty in your own wisdom to consider thoroughly of my cause, there will be no solid reason appear to debar me of justice and your princely favour, which I will endeavour to deserve whilst I breathe. And never ceasing to pray for your Majesty's felicity in all things, continue Your Majesty's A. S."

Anne of Denmark seems to have tried, good-naturedly enough, to intercede with her husband for the prisoner, for on the 22nd July Arbella wrote her a grateful note: "May it please your most Excellent Majesty,—Since I am debarred the happiness of attending your Majesty or so much as to kiss your Royal hands, to pardon my presumption in presenting your Majesty in this rude form my most humble thanks for your Majesty's gracious favour and mediation to his Majesty for me. Which your Majesty's goodness (my greatest comfort and hope in this affliction) I most humbly beseech your Majesty to continue. So praying to the Almighty to reward your Majesty with all honour and felicity both in your Royal self and yours, in all humility I cease. From Lambeth, the 22nd of July, 1610. Your Majesty's most humble and dutiful Subject and servant,—Arbella Seymour."

The following was probably sent at the same time, it also being dated July 1610: "To the Right Honourable the Lords of his Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council. Right Honourable and my very good Lords,—I humbly

beseech you give me leave to become an humble suitor to you to let his Majesty understand my hearty sorrow for his Majesty's displeasure. And that it will please your Honours to become intercessors to his Majesty for me, whose error I assuredly hope his Majesty of his own gracious disposition will, by your good means, rather pardon than any further expiate with imprisonment or other affliction. Which and more, if it were to do his Majesty service or honour, I should endure with alacrity; but this is very grievous, especially as a sign of his Majesty's displeasure, on whose favour all my worldly joy as well as fortune dependeth. Which if I may reobtain, all the course of my life hereafter shall testify my dutiful and humble thankfulness, Arbella Seymaure." Indorsed: "Lady Arbella to the Lords, that it will please them to be a means to his Majesty for her."

On the 16th July, troubled concerning her servants and her debts, she wrote to her ever faithful friend and uncle, the Earl of Shrewsbury: "If it please your lordship, there are divers of my servants with whom I thought never to have parted whilst I lived, and none that I am willing to part with. But since I am taken from them, and know not how to maintain either myself or them, being utterly ignorant how it will please his Majesty to deal with me, I were better to put them away now than towards winter. Your lordship knows the greatness of my debts, and my unableness to do for them either now or at Michaelmas, I beseech your lordship let me know what hope you can give me of his Majesty's favour, without which I and all mine must live in great discomfort, and make me so much bound to you, as both yourself and by means of any that you take to be my friends or pity me, to labour the re-obtaining of his Majesty's favour to me. So humbly thanking your lordship for the care it pleaseth you to have of me and mine, and for your honourable offer, I humbly cease. From Lambeth, the 16th July, 1610. The poor prisoner, your niece,—Arbella Seymaure.

"P.S.—The bay gelding and the rest are at your lordship's commandment."

Shrewsbury seems to have done what he could for her, for she writes to him again on the 19th July: "I acknowledge myself much bound to your lordship for your care in disposing of my servants, but I cannot guess what to do with any of them till I know how his Majesty is inclined towards me. Therefore I again very humbly and earnestly beseech your lordship to move his Majesty on his return to be gracious to me. That according to his Majesty's answer and disposition towards me, I may take order for my servants or anything else concerning me. So with humble thanks I take my leave.

"P.S.—I pray your lordship remember me humbly to my aunt."

Later it is evident that she had received disquieting news concerning Hugh Crompton, her faithful steward, one in whom she placed all her confidence, and in whose hands too lay most of her business affairs. Her uncle wrote to Salisbury that, "If Crompton should perish, the poor lady would be infinitely distressed, he being the man in whom she most reposed her trust touching her debts"; while she herself in great dismay appealed to the Council on the 10th August: "Right Honourable and my very good Lords,—I am constrained to trouble you rather than be guilty of the danger of life wherein Hugh Crompton and Edward Reeves, two of my servants, lately committed to the Marshalsea for my cause, remain. I am informed divers near that prison, and in it, are lately dead, and divers others sick of contagious and deadly diseases. Wherefore I humbly beseech your honours to commiserate their distress, and consider that they are servants, and accountable for divers debts and reckonings, which, if they should die, would be a great prejudice to me and others. And therefore I humbly beseech you to move unto his Majesty my most humble suit, and theirs, that it will please his Majesty they may be removed to some other healthful air.—Arbella Seymaure."

This letter is dated from Millbrook, showing that Arbella was not kept so closely to the house at Lambeth, but that during the hottest days of summer she might still

enjoy some change of air. Nor was her imprisonment rigorously strict in other ways. She certainly corresponded with her husband through a servant, "Smyth," and one of her early letters to him is to be seen among the Harleian MSS., though unfortunately it is the only one, and none of his replies have been discovered. It is a loving and courageous little letter, and reading between the lines, it is easy to see that Seymour took his confinement hardly, grumbling at every little inconvenience, and considering himself ill-used even with all the latitude allowed him. There is a faint hint at reproach for neglect at the end of it, which may or may not have been deserved, since it is possible that all letters passing between the pair may not have been safely delivered. "Sir—," runs the letter, "I am exceeding sorry to hear you have not been well. I pray you let me know truly how you do, and what was the cause of it, for I am not satisfied with the reason Smith gives for it. But if it be a cold, I will impute it to some sympathy betwixt us, having myself gotten a swoln cheek at the same time with a cold. For God's sake, let not your grief of mind work upon your body. You may see by me what inconveniences it will bring one to. And no fortune, I assure you, daunts me so much as that weakness of body I find in myself, for *si nous vivons l'âge d'un veau*, as Marot says, we may by God's grace be happier than we look for in being suffered to enjoy ourselves with his Majesty's favour. But if we be not able to live to it, I, for my part, shall think myself a pattern of misfortune in enjoying so great a blessing as you so little a while. No separation but that deprives me of the comfort of you, for wheresoever you be, or in what state soever you are, it sufficeth me you are mine. Rachel wept, and would not be comforted, because her children were no more; and that indeed is the remediless sorrow, and none else. And therefore God bless us from that, and I will hope well of the rest, though I see no apparent hope. But I am sure God's book mentioneth many of His children in as great distress that have done well after, even in this world. I assure you, nothing the State can do with me can trouble

me so much as this news of your being ill doth. And you see when I am troubled, I trouble you too with tedious kindness, for so I think you will account so long a letter, yourself not having written to me for this good while so much as how you do. But, sweet sir, I speak not this to trouble you with writing, but when you please. Be well, and I shall account myself happy in being your faithful, loving wife,—Arbella.”

Although Arbella assiduously wrote to the King, Queen, Council, and all who might put forth any influence to help her, she did not really expect that anything could be done before the formal inquiry into her case. This seems to have been considerably delayed, and there is no record as to when it was actually concluded, though the examination of “Willyam Semar” is dated the 8th July. Possibly it took time to trace all the actors in the affair, Rodney at least having escaped, though he must have been produced to make his “Declaration before the Council,” quoted in the last chapter. At last, however, all depositions had been made, and after waiting a reasonable time, Arbella addressed the following gentle reminder to the Council: “I humbly beseech your Lordships, now that by examination of all parties the error for which we suffer his Majesty’s displeasure must needs appear neither greater nor less than it is, to give me leave to become an humble suitor to your Lordships with the relation thereof to testify unto his Majesty my hearty sorrow for his Majesty’s displeasure. Restraint from liberty, comfort and counsel of friends, and all the effects of imprisonment, are in themselves very grievous and inflicted as due punishments for greater offences than mine. But that which makes them most heavy to me is that they proceed from his Majesty’s displeasure, whose favour was not only my stay and hope, but greatest joy. If our punishment were to do his Majesty service or honour, I should endure imprisonment and my affliction with patience and alacrity; but being inflicted as a sign of his Majesty’s displeasure, it is very grievous for us, whose error we hope his Majesty, in his own gracious disposition will rather pardon than any

further expiate with affliction. And by God's grace the whole course of our life hereafter shall testify our dutiful and humble thankfulness."

No notice was taken of this petition, and as the autumn months dragged on Arbella realized that the punishment allotted her was oblivion. She was to be ignored by all. Not physically ill-treated, and with no tangible hardships of which to complain, she was to see or hear nothing of her husband—James was unaware of their correspondence—and to be treated as dead or banished by her royal relatives, by the King's Council, and by all the Court. To this she would not tamely submit. Misfortune is a stern test of friendship, but many had vowed attachment to her in prosperity who must now be put to the proof. First she endeavoured once more to gain the King's ear through his wife, and in October wrote again to Queen Anne, pointing out "the condition of my present estate and hard fortune. Now, to whom may I so fitly address myself with confidence of help and mediation as to your royal person (the mirror of our sex), and . . . in a cause of this nature so full of pity and commiseration, I will wholly rely upon your princely goodness, whom I humbly beseech to vouchsafe to enter into a gracious consideration of the true estate of my case and fortune, and then I nothing doubt but that in the true nobleness of your royal mind your Majesty will be pleased to mediate for me in such sort as in your most princely wisdom and favour the same shall be moved." Grown bolder, and with a pride in misfortune, Arbella here signs her married name in full; and on the back of the letter are scribbled these three sentences. "The loss of thy late sister hath honoured thee with the service of my fair flower. *J'ai perdu ta successeur mais non pas tu. La perte de ta sœur te portrait l'honneur d'être serviteur de ma belle fleur.*" She may herself have written them, and they may contain allusion to some secret between the two ladies by which she hoped to claim a warmer sympathy from her cousin's wife; but it is also possible they may be part of some cipher which had no connection with her, or even of some game, for which the back of an old letter proved handy for the moment.

Arbella took enormous pains with the composition of all the letters and petitions she wrote at this time : probably she had little else with which to occupy her thoughts, but her literary taste was always good and not easily satisfied. She made several drafts of each letter before it was sent, and all are full of erasures, crossed-out words and sentences, and altered epithets. Her handwriting varies much with her state of mind, and it is curious to notice how, the more agitated her thoughts, the larger and more scrawling becomes her handwriting. The fair copies she finally sent, however, were almost invariably neat and carefully finished. The petition she enclosed to the Queen for James was probably the following, but since many were sent from Lambeth and none are dated, it is impossible now to be absolutely certain—

“ MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY,

“ The unfortunate estate where unto I am fallen by being deprived of your Majesty’s presence (the greatest comfort to me on earth), together with the opinion of me conceived of your Majesty’s displeasure towards me, hath brought as great affliction to my mind as can be imagined. Nevertheless, touching the offence for which I am now punished, I most humbly beseech your Majesty (in your most princely wisdom and judgment) to consider in what a miserable state I had been if I had taken any other course than I did, for my own conscience witnessing before God that I was then the wife of him that now I am, I could never have matched with any other man, but to have lived all the days of my life as an harlot, which your Majesty would have abhorred in any, especially in one who hath the honour (how otherwise unfortunate soever) to have any drop of your Majesty’s blood in them. But I will trouble your Majesty no longer, but in all humility attending your Majesty’s good pleasure for that liberty (the want whereof depriveth me of all health and all other worldly comfort), I will never forget to pray for your Majesty’s most happy prosperity for ever in all things, and so remain—

“ Your Majesty’s most faithful subject and servant.”

Queen Anne, a kind-hearted woman for all her foolish vanities, seems to have been genuinely sorry for her gentle cousin, and apparently replied to her through Lady Jane Drummond, for Arbella's next letter is addressed to that lady, and was either sent in duplicate, or by mistake she enclosed with it the rough copy. It runs : " Good Cousin, —I pray you do me the kindness to present this letter of mine in all humility to her Majesty, and with all my most humble and dutiful thanks for the gracious commiseration it pleaseth her Majesty to have of me as I hear to my great comfort. I presume to make suit to her Majesty, because, if it please her Majesty to intercede for me, I cannot but hope to be restored to her Majesty's service and his Majesty's favour, whose just and gracious disposition, I verily think, would have been moved to compassion ere this by the consideration both of the cause, in itself honest and lamentable, and of the honour I have to be so near his Majesty and his in blood, but that it is God's will her Majesty should have a hand in so honourable and charitable a work as to reobtain his Majesty's favour to one that esteemeth it her greatest worldly comfort. So, wishing you all honour and happiness, I take leave, and remain, your very loving cousin.—A. S."

To this came the reply : " Madame,—I received your ladyship's letter, and with it another paper which has just the same words that was in the letter, but your ladyship did not command me to do anything with it, so as I cannot imagine to what use you sent it, always I shall keep it till I know your ladyship's pleasure. Yesterday being Sunday, I could have little time to speak with her Majesty, but this day her Majesty hath seen your ladyship's letter. Her Majesty says that when she gave your ladyship's petition and letter to his Majesty, he did take it well enough, but gave no answer than that ye ' had eaten of the forbidden tree.' This was all her Majesty commanded me to say to your ladyship in this purpose, but withal did remember her kindly to your ladyship, and sent you this little token in notice of the continuation of her Majesty's favours to your ladyship. Now, where your ladyship desires me to

deal openly and freely with you, I protest I can say nothing on knowledge, for I never spake to any of that purpose but to the Queen, but the wisdom of this state, with the example how some of your quality in the like cause has been used, makes me fear that ye shall not find so easy end to your troubles as ye expect or I wish. This is all I can say, and I should think myself happy if my notions could give better testimony of my truly being your ladyship's affectionate friend to do you service,—Jane Drummond.”

The tone of this was gloomy and little encouraging, but Arbella was grateful for the Queen's favour, and refused to be intimidated. She believed that her cause had only to be fairly heard to be judged in her favour, and she replied at once, enclosing for the Queen a gift of the embroidery at which her slender fingers were always so skilful: “Good Cousin,—I pray you present her Majesty my most humble thanks for the token of the continuance of her Majesty's favour towards me that I received in your letter, which hath so cheered me as I hope I shall be the better able to pass over my sorrow till it please God to move his Majesty's heart to compassion of me, whilst I may thereby assure myself I remain in her Majesty's favour, though all other worldly comforts be withdrawn from me; and will not cease to pray to the Almighty to reward her Majesty for her gracious regard of me in this distress with all happiness to her royal self and hers. I pray you likewise present her Majesty this piece of my work, which I humbly beseech her Majesty to accept in remembrance of the poor prisoner, her Majesty's most humble servant, that wrought them, in hope those royal hands will vouchsafe to wear them, which till I have the honour to kiss, I shall live in a great deal of sorrow. I must also render you my kindest thanks for your so friendly and freely imparting your opinion of my suit. But whereas my good friends may doubt my said suit will be more long and difficult to obtain than they wish by reason of the wisdom of this state in dealing with others of my quality in the like cause, I say that I never heard nor read of anybody's case that might

be truly and justly compared with this of mine, which, being truly considered, will be found so far differing as there can be no true resemblance made thereof to any others; and so I am assured that both their Majesties (when it shall please them duly to examine it in their princely wisdoms) will easily discern. And I do earnestly entreat you to move her Majesty to vouchsafe the continuance of her so gracious a beginning on my behalf, and to persuade his Majesty to weigh my cause aright, and then I shall not doubt but speedily to receive that royal grace and favour that my own soul witnesseth I have ever deserved at his hands, and will ever endeavour to deserve of him and his whilst I have breath. And so, with many thanks to yourself for your kind offices, I take leave, and rest, your very loving cousin,—Arbella Seymaure.”

But the optimistic mood passed; and after, it seems, a long pause—none of these Drummond letters are dated—follows the anxious little note: “Good Cousin,—I think myself as much beholden to you as if my man had brought me assurance of his Majesty’s favours by her Majesty’s means, because I find your kindness in remembering me and preventing suspicions. But I cannot rest satisfied till I may know what disaster of mine hindreth his Majesty’s goodness towards me, having such a mediatrix to plead so just and honest a cause as mine. Therefore I pray you with all earnestness let me know freely what hath been done concerning me. So, wishing you all honour and happiness, I take leave. Yours.” This is indorsed, “Two letters by Smith now.”

Autumn passed into winter, and James took no notice of his erring cousin. Echoes of Court gaieties floated to her in the quiet house at Lambeth, and though she cared nothing for such doings, it must have hurt her more than a little to note how few who had flattered and paid fulsome attentions to her in brighter days seemed even to remember her existence now. Sometimes she bitterly thought herself forgotten of all, but this was scarcely true. A very Stuart, even in misfortune she held the power of inspiring the warmest devotion in those about her: Sir Thomas Parry,

her so-called gaoler, made circumstances as easy and pleasant as he could for her, reading a leniency into his instructions they were never intended to bear : while from her former life came many an instance of unswerving faithfulness. Hugh Crompton, her steward, as we shall see, never ceased his efforts for her release ; Anne Bradshaw, her maid, would not leave her side ; and the most pathetic tale of all is told by Lucy, Mrs. Hutchinson, of her husband's mother, Margaret Byron. Arbella had taken a fancy to Margaret when she was only nine years old, had taken her to Court as her maid of honour, and her fondness for the girl, who was a poet and musician of no mean order, had wakened in return a passionate attachment. Mrs. Hutchinson says in her *Memoirs* : " She minded nothing but her lady, and grew up so intimate in all her councils that the princess was more delighted in her than in any other of the women about her ; but when she (the princess) was carried away from them to prison, my lady's brother, Sir John Byron, fetched her home to his house, and there, though his lady laboured to comfort her with all imaginable kindness, yet so constant was her friendship to the unfortunate princess that I have heard her servants say even after her marriage she would steal many melancholy hours to sit and weep in remembrance of her." Margaret Byron married Sir Thomas Hutchinson, and was only twenty-six when she fell dead one day in the midst of a song.

Arbella, however, had more powerful friends than these. It is scarcely likely that she omitted to beg for Salisbury's influence more personally than in her formal petitions to the Council, of which he was a member ; but though a much later letter of hers is supposed to have been intended for him, we have none of this date. No doubt, however, many letters have been lost, or may yet be discovered amongst old family papers. The Shrewsburys stood faithfully by her, but they do not seem to have been able to accomplish much : indeed, Lady Shrewsbury's efforts seem to have been indiscreet, and to have led only to ill-feeling. She did not like Seymour, nor he her ; but she would have done much for her old favourite Arbella.

As to Seymour's own family, one member only, his younger brother Francis, seems to have been in any sympathy with the prisoners. Old Lord Hertford was too miserably fearful lest the King might think him concerned in his grandson's presumption; and beyond exculpating himself, and begging for William's pardon, his only personal intercourse with the young man was in reference to the allowance William extracted from his reluctant pocket. Lord Beauchamp, the culprit's father, appears almost a cypher; one never hears of his taking any action, kind or cruel, in this or any other affair; and with regard to his elder son Edward history is equally silent. But Francis must have openly showed kindness, for letters from both his brother and Arbella are extant, thanking him for his sympathy and goodwill; and Arbella, who addresses, "To my honourable good brother Mr. Francis Seymour," speaks emphatically of her William's constancy, and hopes that "howsoever higher powers cross the greatest part of my happiness in depriving me for a time of your dear brother, my husband, I may not be altogether a stranger to your family, and yourself in particular, whose extraordinary kindness in this time shall be requited, God willing, with the redoubled love of so near alliance and obligation. I will endeavour to make my patience deserve excuse, if not consideration, at your hands; but it is the virtue I wish may be best put to the proof in my friends, of all others."

Seymour, whose letter is dated the 4th November, gives his brother thanks too, but spends most of his space grumbling at his grandfather, and at the conduct of Lady Shrewsbury. As for the latter, he says: "I can expect no good from her, since I am credibly informed that she doth more harm than good, as I can in some particulars evidently prove; but I am not deceived in her, since I never expected other from her." For a prisoner, Seymour seems to have been allowed a good deal of latitude from the outset, but it did not content him, and it was probably about this time that, declaring his health to have suffered seriously from the confinement, he addressed his first petition to the Council to request the "liberty of the

Tower.” Hitherto he had left all pleas and persuasions to his wife, his excuse for which seems more than a little lame. “May it please your Lordships,”—he writes now, “Since his Majesty is so highly offended with me that I dare not as yet (fearing farther to incur his Majesty’s disfavour) offer any manner of petition to his Princely hands, before the way be made more easy, I only address myself to your honourable Lordships, being now bereft of my nearest friends, through his Majesty’s indignation, humbly beseeching you to be intercessors to his Majesty, that it would please him of his gracious and accustomed bounty to restore me to his most wished for favour and my former liberty; or if that may seem too large a suit, that it would please his Majesty in the meantime to grant me the liberty of this place, to the recovering of my former health, which through my long and close imprisonment is much decayed and will not easily, I fear me, be repaired, whereof the Lieutenant can well certify your Lordships. I must confess I have offended his Majesty, which is my greatest sorrow, yet I hope not in that measure that should deserve my utter ruin and destruction, since I protest my offence was committed before I knew it to be an offence. Wherefore I humbly beseech your Lordships, since the bottom of this wound is searched, to be a means that it may be healed. Thus relying on your Lordships’ honourable dispositions, I humbly take my leave, resting all ways To be commanded by yr Lordships,—W. S.”

It would seem that Seymour’s prayer was granted, for after this it is almost certain that husband and wife not only corresponded, but were occasionally permitted stolen interviews. Neither was very strictly kept, and sympathy was great for both; but if the King had known he would have been beside himself with rage. It was serious enough that they had married: his one desire now was to keep them apart. In this he was ungenerous, for neither had the least intention of laying claim to the throne, to which, indeed, his own succession was now so firmly established that any such claim would have been frankly absurd; and he had known and liked Arbella so long that he must have

been aware how far any such intention was from her mind. But she had married, married secretly and without his consent, and married a man whose father's claim had been dreaded by James's predecessor even more than his own. Frankly James was afraid, and fear is the strongest thing in the world, stronger even than jealousy or habit. There was also the petty love of tyrannical punishment, a love which makes irresistible appeal to small mean minds. True, Arbella had been wrong; but frankly she had confessed her fault, and any man of heart must quickly have pardoned her.

Christmas came, and again there were gay masques and brilliant pageants at Whitehall; but she who had been the centre of them all was there no more. At this time Arbella wrote once again to the Queen: "May it please your most Excellent Majesty to consider how long I have lived a spectacle of his Majesty's displeasure, to my unspeakable grief, and out of that gracious disposition which moveth your Royal mind to compassion of the distress, may it please your Majesty to move his Majesty in my behalf. I have presumed to present your Majesty herewith the copy of my humble petition to his Majesty against this time, when the rather I am sure his Majesty forgiveth greater offences as freely as he desires to be forgiven by Him whose sacrament he is to receive, though your Majesty's intercession at any time I know were sufficient. Thus hath my long experience of your Majesty's gracious favour to me and all good causes encouraged me to presume to address myself unto your Majesty, and increased the obligation of my duty in praying continually unto the Almighty for your Majesty's felicity in all things. And in all humility I remain, Your Majesty's.—To the Q."

Neither this nor the petition it enclosed drew any response. On the 24th January we find recorded a Warrant to pay Sir Thomas Parry, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, £300 for the diet, lodging, and other necessities of the Lady Arbella Seymour and five of her servants during the seven months of her continuance with him. Some have regarded this as marking the date when

she was taken from Parry's custody, but since that was done very suddenly, and she remained with him till the middle of March, this must certainly be an error. There is nothing remarkable in Parry receiving payment at the New Year, for his royal charge must have cost him a good deal. As for her, we hear of no more petitions for the present; and probably she was more contented now, since she could see her husband almost whenever she wished, and a quiet life was never any deprivation to her. How these visits of Seymour were managed it is impossible to say, but there were probably many means of reaching the river from St. Thomas's Tower, and at Lambeth all was made easy. There is a tradition that on one occasion Arbella herself took a barge, dropped down the river by night, and spoke to her husband through a grated window on the Tower wharf. At any rate both had many friends. Arbella's correspondence was quite untrammelled, and we have an interesting letter to her dated the 7th March, from one Mrs. Alice Collingwood, whose husband Francis Collingwood had been imprisoned in the Tower for four years past on a charge of slandering the King. Alice thought Arbella, parted also from her husband, might sympathize with her and perhaps exert some influence to help her, little guessing, poor soul, how deaf were the King's ears to all the vain prayers of his once loved cousin. Nor is this letter the only proof that Arbella's plight was scarcely known to any beyond the Court circle, for there is a little book entitled *Salve Deus*, which was published this year and written by Mistress Emilia Lanyer, wife of Captain Alfonzo Lanyer, actually a member of the King's household, in which, after verses of dedication to "The Queen, Lady Elizabeth, and all vertuous Ladies in generall," some most complimentary lines are added to the Lady Arbella—

“Great learned Ladie, whom I long have knowne,
 And yet not knowne so much as I desired;
 Rare Phoenix, whose fair feathers are your owne,
 With which you flie, and are so much admired;
 True woman, whom true Fame hath so attired

In glittering raiment, shining much more bright
Than silver starres in the most frosty night ;
Come, like the morning sunne new out of bed,
And cast your eyes upon this little Booke."

Arbella herself probably never saw these verses, and in Prince Henry's own copy, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, they are expressly cut out as if to emphasize her disgrace. But she must have cared little for such compliments now, since a fresh and appalling crisis was about to arise in her own life. James became suddenly aware of the lax manner in which his prisoners had been kept, and, overwhelmed with fury, he peremptorily commanded Parry to deliver his charge up to the Bishop of Durham, who was ordered to convey her instantly to the north of England, far from all possibility of reunion with the man she loved.

CHAPTER XVI

ON THE NORTH ROAD

(*March-June, 1611*)

THE Royal Warrant to William James, Bishop of Durham, was written from Royston on the 13th March, and runs substantially as follows :—

“ JAMES R.

“ Right Reverend Father in God, and Trusty and Well-beloved,—We greet you well. Whereas our cousin the Lady Arbella hath highly offended us in seeking to marry herself without our knowledge (to whom she had the honour to be near in blood), and in proceeding afterwards to a full conclusion of a marriage with the selfsame person whom (for many just causes) we had expressly forbidden her to marry; after he had in our presence, and before our Council, forsworn all interest concerning her, either past or present, with solemn protestations upon his allegiance, in her hearing, never to renew any such motion again. Forasmuch as it is more necessary for us to make some such demonstration now of the just sense and feeling we have, after so great an indignity offered unto us . . . we have therefore thought good, out of trust in your fidelity and discretion, to remit to your care and custody the person of our said cousin, requiring and authorizing you hereby to carry her down in your company to any house of yours as unto you shall seem best and most convenient, there to remain in such sort as shall be set down to you by directions from the Council. . . . This being, as you see, the difference between us and her—that whereas she hath abounded towards us in disobedience and ingratitude, we are (on the contrary) still apt to temper the severity of

our justice with grace and favour towards her, as may well appear by the course we have taken to commit her only to your custody, in whose house she may be so well assured to receive all good usage, and see more fruit and exercise of religion and virtue than in many other places. For all which this shall be your sufficient warrant."

Two days later the Lords of the Council issued a Warrant to Parry to deliver Arbella up to the Bishop, which was probably the first intimation he or his household had of the proposed change, and which came as a thunderclap upon the house at Lambeth. During the nine months of her stay, Arbella had endeared herself to Parry and all his people; they would feel her loss deeply, and in addition, this command meant the displeasure of the King. But upon the unfortunate lady herself the blow fell heaviest. Well she knew its significance; she and her William were to be parted, imprisoned in different parts of England, never to meet more; it was exactly the same policy as had been employed in the case of Hertford and Katherine Grey. She knew that by the law of her country she could demand a trial, and might have demanded it long before; but though the time granted her now was short, she would at least still make the attempt. She sat down and wrote a letter addressed jointly to Sir Thomas Fleming, Lord Chief Justice of England, and to Sir Edward Coke, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, a noble and dignified production, in which for the first time she broke away from the old pretence that the King's disfavour alone caused her misery, and spoke straightforwardly of her grief at being separated from her husband.

"MY LORDS,

"Whereas I have been long restrained from my liberty, which is as much to be regarded as my life, and am appointed, as I understand, to be removed far from these courts of justice where I ought to be examined, tried, and then condemned or cleared, to remote parts, whose courts I hold unfitted for the trial of my offence: this is to beseech your Lordships to inquire by an Habeas Corpus

or other usual form of law what is my fault; and if, upon examination by your Lordships, I shall thereof be justly convicted, let me endure such punishment by your Lordships' sentence as is due to such an offender. And if your Lordships may not or will not of yourselves grant unto me the ordinary relief of a distressed subject, then I beseech you become humble intercessors to his Majesty that I may receive such benefit of justice as both his Majesty by his oath, those of his blood not excepted, hath promised, and the laws of this realm afford to all others. And though, unfortunate woman that I am, I should obtain neither, yet I beseech your Lordships, retain me in your good opinion, and judge charitably till I be proved to have committed any offence, either against God or his Majesty, deserving so long restraint or separation from my lawful husband. So, praying for your Lordships, I rest Your afflicted poor suppliant,

“ A. S.”

No answer came to this. It would not, of course, have been possible for her to receive one before leaving Lambeth, which James commanded should be the following day; but both Coke and Fleming were creatures of the Earl of Northampton, who even as Lord Henry Howard before the King's accession, had always been the enemy of Arbella and the Shrewsburys; and Northampton had long since resolved that she should never marry, or at least should never leave a child. The justice of England therefore was suborned to this resolve, the coronation oath of James was violated, and this unhappy and forlorn woman, his nearest relative beyond his immediate family, was driven out into the wilderness, the scapegoat of others' ambition.

The Bishop of Durham arrived at Lambeth at eight o'clock in the morning of the 16th March, and found there a household of distraction and dismay. He was a kindly old man, and must have loathed the task the King had laid upon him: his letter to the Council gives a pitiful account of his reception. So short a time had been allowed

for the necessary change that it was quite impossible to have everything packed and ready for a start that day; and Arbella, pale and almost swooning, "cold drops bursting from her forehead," implored the Bishop to postpone his departure, even till the morrow. This, under the King's command, it was not possible for him to do; and a terrible scene followed. The poor woman was almost distracted; she demanded to see the King's letters, which were shown her; not because she doubted the Bishop's credentials, but probably to gain time, even a few minutes. She would resist to the utmost this being dragged away into banishment. Sir Thomas Parry and her own doctor, Moundford (who had attended Essex on the scaffold, and had now been with her for many years), were present at this interview, during which the Bishop "used all his poor skill" to induce a resigned spirit in the unhappy victim. He told her tales of saints and martyrs, and of horrible sufferings and trials borne without a murmur, he extolled the virtues of patience and obedience, and finally, although all this can have signified very little to Arbella at the moment, she became calmer, and was persuaded to start upon her dreaded journey. Since her baggage was not all ready, the rest must follow. Barnet was, strictly speaking, the first stage, but since in Arbella's exhausted state it would not be possible to travel so far in a day, the Council issued a hasty Warrant to "Our loving friend, Sir William Bond, Knt, or in his absence, to the Lady his wife, at High Gate," bidding them, "Forasmuch as there is some occasion to make provision for one night's lodging for the Lady Arbella, in respect that she cannot conveniently recover Barnet, some things being wanting for her journey this afternoon, contrary to our expectations, we have thought good to entreat you not to refuse such a courtesy as the lending of a couple of chambers for her ladyship; because we doubt the inns there are full of inconveniences. By doing whereof you shall give us cause to report well of you to his Majesty."

Arbella was always of a fragile constitution, and the state of despair into which she was now thrown rendered

her suddenly most alarmingly ill. She was carried in a litter to Highgate, which was reached between ten and eleven at night: three times on the way she fainted, and the party had to stop while De Moundford administered strong restoratives. She was finally lifted out more dead than alive, carried into the house and put to bed, where she lay unconscious for some time and then fell into a heavy and stupefied sleep. The poor Bishop, who had also spent an exhausting day, says that "being somewhat distempered myself," he could speak only a few fair words to his charge on arrival that night, but that Sir William Bond and his Lady received her "with especial care both of her and such as were about her." Next morning, however, the good prelate went early to her bedside and spoke cheerfully of "the sweet day and air, and the duty of her journey"; but he was received only with gloomy looks. Arbella declared herself quite incapable of proceeding a single step that day, and the Doctor, "who took careful and diligent pains about her," also pronounced it absolutely impossible. The Bishop then asked if she would like him to say prayers, and she replied yes, but since he wished to prepare a special sermon for her, this was necessarily postponed till he had despatched his letter to the Council, asking for further instructions. Dr. Moundford, who seems to have been genuinely attached to Arbella, wrote too, corroborating the grave anxiety of her condition; and since under these circumstances it was impossible to insist upon her proceeding immediately, King and Council grudgingly granted her a few days' rest at Highgate, until the 21st of the month. Her illness was undoubtedly chiefly nervous, yet those who have endured the like themselves will know how intense such suffering may be. A body always delicate is easily overthrown by only a few days of such shattering pain; and though making, it is true, no attempt to conquer it, since she would almost have sacrificed her life to remain a few days within touch of London, Arbella's health most certainly broke down, suddenly and seriously, beneath the strain.

When the 21st came she was even more loth to leave Highgate than Lambeth; and a reason for this reluctance has been discovered in the fact that once certainly, and possibly oftener, her husband contrived to visit her here. Highgate after all was not very distant; and "the liberty of the Tower" seems to have comprised liberty also outside the Tower, with such facility does Seymour seem to have appeared at various places while ostensibly imprisoned there. The additional rigour exercised upon his wife was never applied to him, either now or at any time during their joint imprisonment. It is difficult, nevertheless, to understand how he can have managed this ubiquity, since he remained on very bad terms with Waad; nor why, having got so far, he did not escape altogether; but his parole was perhaps required before any such enlargement, or he may even have persuaded some other prisoner to personate him in his absence. The means by which we know of his meeting with Arbella is this. Her steward, Hugh Crompton, whose health had always suffered from his imprisonment, had at last been released from the Marshalsea, and was now permitted to accompany her on her journey to the north. All her business affairs had for some time rested in this man's hands, and through all the most gloomy vicissitudes of the next few years, he faithfully set down her accounts, received and disbursed her money as she wished, and kept the most careful note of all her possessions. But in the present desperate straits, unaware what the future might hold for any of them, whether it might be necessary or wise at some time to attempt escape, or even how soon even this faithful servant might be taken from her, Arbella decided to relieve Crompton of some of his responsibilities, and for this purpose she and her husband signed a paper "discharging him of all accounts, reckonings, receipts and demands whatsoever, whereby he may be charged by us or by either of us from the beginning of the world until the day of the date of this present." There is a recklessness in the wording here which is very significant. The document is the only one extant signed by both husband and wife

jointly, and it is sealed by Arbella with the Lennox crest, a wolf rampant: the witnesses to it were Rodney and Kirton, who had both by now been released. The date given on it is 21st March 1610, evidently an error for 1611, since the pair were not married the year before; but there are many errors in dates through all this confusing time. The 21st March was the day on which Arbella left Highgate and arrived at Barnet, and it is probable that Seymour spent the night with her, and they signed this paper just before they parted. If so, this must have been the last time they ever met.

The King had ordered that if Arbella would not go to Barnet on the day named, she was to be taken there by force; and this seems to have been necessary, for the Bishop with much reluctance, explains that he had been compelled to use "the means proscribed, which were employed with all decency and respect." She was lifted into her litter in tears, complaining of acute pains in the head, and though the journey to Barnet does not cover many miles, she suffered all the way from such violent attacks of sickness that several times the party had to stop while good Dr. Moundford's cordials were administered. It was only intended that the prisoner should remain one night at Barnet, but her condition when she arrived there was such that it would have been sheer brutality to drag her further the next day; so the Bishop was once more obliged to report delay to the Council. The Postmaster at Barnet, perhaps out of mistaken sympathy with Arbella, rudely refused to dispatch his letter, saying it was after hours, so the Bishop's own servant had to take it. The letter shows the poor prelate in a very worried state, and while offering no opinion himself as to Lady Arbella's powers, he adds that her doctor declares it impossible for her to proceed. He thanks the Council, however, for promising to send down Sir James Croft, to share with him the responsibility of his onerous charge.

One feels a good deal of sympathy at this juncture with Gilbert, Earl of Shrewsbury. His affection for his niece was great and had been well proved; but he was a

member of the Council, had to sign all the harsh decrees against her, and by his very relationship was regarded with suspicion, and less able to help her than almost any other man. The day after the sad little party had reached Barnet, he wrote to Moundford, thanking him for all his care of Arbella, stating that he had heard "how very hardly the few miles you travelled yesterday were overcome," and begging the good doctor to write his wife an account of the real state of her favourite niece's health. "For my part," adds the poor man, "I can doe her very small service more than by my prayers"; for on applying to the King to have mercy on her really piteous condition, all the reply he got was that "It was enough to make any sound man sick to be carried in a bed in that manner she is; much more for her whose impatient and unquiet spirits heapeth upon herself far greater indisposition of body."

On the 24th March, Arbella herself wrote the following pathetic letter to the Lords of the Council. "May it please your Lordships: I protest I am in so weak case as I verily think it would be the cause of my death to be removed anywhither at this time, though it were to a place to my liking. My late discomfortable journey, which I have not yet recovered, had almost ended my days, and I have never since gone out of a few little and hot rooms, and am in many ways unfit to take the air. I trust your Lordships will not look I should be so un-Christian as to be the cause of my own death, and I leave it to your Lordships' wisdom to consider what the world should conceive if I should be violently enforced to do it. Therefore I beseech your Lordships to be humble suitors in my behalf that I may have some time given me to recover my strength, which I should the sooner do if I were not continually molested. And I will hope and pray that God will incline his Majesty's heart every way to more compassion towards me, who rest very humbly at your Lordships' command, A. S."

Perhaps moved by pressure upon so many sides, it was at last decided that Arbella should be granted a month's rest, dating from the 25th March, in which to recover her

strength; and since the Bishop could not be expected any longer to neglect the cares of his diocese, he must proceed to Durham alone, leaving her in the charge of Sir James Croft, who was to bring her north so soon as she was strong enough to bear the journey. James, however, whose ancient kindness towards his cousin seemed now to have turned to gall, frankly declared that he believed her to be shamming, and sent Dr. Hammond, his sons' physician, down to see; her own doctor and the Bishop, he thought, might easily be imposed upon. But if this were so, Arbella managed quickly to win over Dr. Hammond also. She had known him before at Court, and received him now with her old gentle grace, he having "access unto her," Moundford wrote to Shrewsbury, "before he spake with the lord bishop or did confer with me. She entertained him in respect of the persons from whom he said he was sent most respectfully; and in regard that he was not a stranger unto her, kindly. He felt her pulse, and entered into some discourse of her weakness and infirmities."

He left Barnet again on the 28th March, having prescribed certain physic which Moundford, while promising to follow the royal doctor's advice "with all dewe respect," considered useless, "since by none of this he can warrant either amendment of her grief or contynuance of lyfe if some content of minde be not gained." He admits that constant restoratives were dangerous in the fevered state of the patient, but holds that exhaustion was still worse, and on the whole he preferred to "cherish her to life." In reply to this letter, Gilbert wrote the faithful doctor an account of Hammond's report upon his return. "I heartily thanke you (good Mr. Dr.) for your letter by Mr. Smyth, and am still very sorry that you cannot give us any better hope of the good estate of her La^{ps} body than we can reade in your sayde letter. I was present yesterday morning when Mr. Dr. Hammond made report to the Lords in what state he found my Lady Arbella . . . assuredly very weak, her pulse dull and melancholy for the most part, yet sometimes uncertain . . . her countenance very heavy, pale and wan; nevertheless, she was

free (he said) from any fever or any other actual sickness, but of his conscience he protested that she was in no case to travel until God restored her to some better strength both of body and mind. . . . He attendeth on the princes (as always he doth) to Royston on Monday next, and then he is himself to relate the same to his Majesty, as he did to us; for at that time his Majesty was so extremely pestered with despatches upon his going away, as there could be no full report made unto him of any particulars, only he was told of her weakness. All her ladyship's friends in general are glad of the bishop's departing, and her stay for a time where she is to be, verily hoping that she will likewise receive great comfort therein; and how far soever her own melancholy thoughts (which have gotten the upperhand of her) have prevailed to lay nothing but despair before her eyes, yet the greatest, nearest and wisest about his Majesty that do speak with me, do persuade themselves that her imprisonment (wheresoever it be) and his Majesty's disfavour to her, is not like to continue long; and therein I am bound to believe them, or else I must conceive they have neither honour nor conscience, for such is their protestations to me. God grant her ladyship may be of the same mind; as then I should not much doubt of her speedy recovery, which heartily praying for, I will here take my hearty leave. Your very assured loving friend, Gilb. Shrewsbury."

There is an optimistic note about this letter which looks as though the tide were turning at last, and poor Arbella might after all be restored to favour. Her month's respite, however, could not be spent at the "Inne" where she had been taken only for a night, and it was a few days before a house suitable for her occupation was found. This was a cottage at East Barnet, near Hampstead Heath, belonging to Mr. Thomas Conyers, in a remote but healthy situation, and it was hired for her at the price of twenty shillings a week. She seems to have been pleased at the idea; and on the 31st March, Sir James Croft, who had by this time arrived, wrote to Salisbury that Lady Arbella "had had a violent attack in the head, but had

dressed herself as well as her extreme weakness would permit, and showed readiness to remove, but could not, because nothing was prepared for her at Mr. Conyers' house." Three days later he reports that she had been safely removed to Mr. Conyers's house, but had been extremely ill on the journey. Directly she arrived, however, she penned the following grateful little note to the King. "May it please your most excellent Majesty: Graciously to accept my most humble thanks for these halcyon days it hath pleased your Majesty to grant me. And since it hath pleased your Majesty to give this testimony of willingness to have me live awhile, in all humility I beg the restitution of those comforts without which every hour of my life is discomfortable to me, the principal whereof is your Majesty's favour, which none that breathes can more highly esteem than I, who, whilst I live, will not cease to pray to the Almighty for your Majesty's prosperity, and rest your Majesty's most humble and faithful, almost ruined subject and servant, Arbella S."

The Bishop accompanied his charge to her new abode, and then, leaving her with Sir James and his cousin, a man named Minors, hurried north, stopping a few days at Royston on his way, to report to the King in what state he had left his prisoner. Writing to Croft and Moundford on the 17th April, he describes his interview, and he too seems hopeful as to the future. "I was no sooner come into the court," says he, "but I was presently brought to his Majesty, who asked me of the Lady Arbella, and where I left her. I told his Majesty of her estate in her three removes; of the grief which she conceived of his Majesty's indignation; of her hearty and zealous prayers for him and his; of her willingness, if it might so please him, even to sweep his chamber. Whereunto it pleased his Majesty to call the prince, who was then in the same room. I do not see but that his Majesty is well pleased with the time she hath to recover strength, and that he hath an especial care that she should be used and respected as a noble lady of her birth and nearness to him; and time may work that which in this shortness cannot be effected.

I pray you present my duty and service unto her, to pray her to remember what I oftentimes out of a true heart (as yourselves in my hearing have done) have said unto her. So shall she best please God by her obedience, satisfy his Majesty, comfort her own conscience, enable her good friends to speak for her, and stop the mouths (if any there be) who envy her restitution into his Majesty's favour. My poor opinion is that, if she wrong not herself, God in time will move his Majesty's heart to have compassion upon her."

It was easy enough for every one around her to preach patience; but Arbella herself was growing desperate. Her month of rest was nearly over, and then, as the Bishop rather tactlessly reminded her, "they should meet in the north"; and every step towards the north meant a step further from Seymour and her love. She had almost ceased to hope now for intercession from her friends, and though many were still kindly disposed towards her, they were unable to benefit her in any way. From many slight hints one gathers that Prince Henry would have helped her if he could, and was always glad to have news of her, but all he actually accomplished was to send his favourite chaplain to minister to her whilst at East Barnet, as appears by an entry in the long list of accounts dealing with this dreary time. "To Mathias Melwarde, one of the Prince's chaplaynes for his paynes in attending the Ladye Arbella Seymour to preache and reade prayers during her abode at Estbarnett—£5." The Bishop's letter, however, far from cheering, seems to have thrown Arbella into renewed depression. On the same date Croft wrote to the Council, asking for further instructions concerning her, and stating that, "She is somewhat better and lightsomer than heretofore, but that not otherwise than that she hath not yet walked as yet the length of her bedchamber, to my knowledge, neither do I find her at any time otherwise than in her naked bed, or in her clothes upon her bed. Concerning her ladyship's mind, it is so much dejected, as she apprehendeth nothing but fear and danger in their ugliest forms, conceiting always

the worst, and much worse than any way can happen unto her, of danger. As to her going this journey, or that his Majesty should dispose of her at his pleasure, she doth not gainsay, but the horrors of her utter ruin and end, which hourly present themselves to her phantasy, occasioned (as she discovereth herself unto me) by the remoteness of the place whereunto she must go, driveth her to utter despair to return, or to be able to live out one only year; where otherwise, if she were left, as her ladyship saith, in some convenient place, not so clean out of the world as she termeth Durham to be, she would gather to herself some weak hopes of more gentle fortune in time to come. These and the like are the best and pleasingest discourses that I can any time have with her ladyship, whereunto whatsoever I can reply to the contrary giveth her no manner of satisfaction at all."

Perhaps in consequence of this appeal, the prisoner was permitted to outstay her month, which would otherwise have been concluded on the 25th April; for on the 28th, Minors, whom Croft had sent to London to beg further indulgence for her, writes to his kinsman that when called before the Lords the preceding night, "I told my lady's weak estate, and afterwards they told me the king's absolute resolution, which is directly for Durham, for which she must prepare, although the journeys be never so little, to go on Monday next, which was the longest day I could get. I pray you let her know that some of the greatest of them did in solemn oaths protest that they find, by his Majesty's resolution, that there shall be no long abode for her there, but his Majesty intended her good in short time after, but that his Majesty kept that in his breast till he saw conformity; but if his Majesty be king, he says, he will not alter this resolution. Therefore I pray you use your best means to prepare her ladyship for the journey at that day, for there is no doubt it will follow for her honour's good."

Too well did Arbella know all these smooth methods of shuffling the unfortunate out of sight with promises of vague benefits hereafter; she did not believe one word of

them, and would at least make no pretence of being deceived. To gain time was all she could hope, but time was now everything; already it is certain a plot was being laid to free her; at Barnet she was in easy daily communication not only with Seymour but also with her Aunt Mary, a determined champion; and at all costs she must not now leave it. With infinite trouble and many rewritings she penned another and most moving application to the King, which seems at last to have touched even his stony heart. "May it please your excellent Majesty," she wrote; "though it hath pleased God to lay so many crosses upon me as I account myself the most miserable creature living, yet none is so grievous to me as the loss of your Majesty's favour, which appeareth, not so much to my unspeakable grief in any other effect . . . as in that your Majesty giveth credence, as I hear, to those sinister reports which impute that to my obstinacy which proceedeth merely out of necessity; not willing that I might be thought guilty of hastening my own death by any voluntary action of mine having first endeavoured, by all good means, to make my extreme weakness known to your Majesty. . . . But nothing availing me, certainly I had suddenly perished if your Majesty had not speedily had compassion of me in granting me this time of stay for my recovery; to which, if it may please your Majesty of your gracious goodness to add three weeks more, Mr. Dr. Moundford hopes I may recover so much strength as may enable me to travel. And I shall ever be willing, whilst I breathe, to yield your Majesty most humble and dutiful obedience as to my sovereign, for whose felicity for ever in all things I cease not to pray, and in all fortunes rest Your Majesty's most humble and faithful subject and servant, A. S."

Apparently Arbella understood well enough that for her to go to Durham was now become a matter of honour with the King's obstinacy—a test of his will; he had said she should go, and therefore she must submit; for with this letter goes another paper, not written by her, and signed "J," in which it is noted that she has promised

as a proof of obedience “to undergo the journey after this time expired without any resistance or refusal, to do such things as are fit for me to do to make my journey the less painful or perilous; being now assured that your Majesty hath no purpose to make my correction my ruin in any sort, as I will hope confidently when I have herein satisfied the duty.” A marginal note, however, suggests that the obedience “without the journey is enough if the King desire but his honour saved.”

It is noticeable that wherever Arbella went, she quickly awoke the sympathy of all those about her, even when the expression of it might conflict with their highest worldly interests; and tears, swoons and renewed weakness now so worked upon Croft and Moundford that they themselves journeyed to London, and bore testimony to the King and Council that it would be gross cruelty to force her yet to face the hardships of the road. After many demurs, the King, writes Moundford to the Bishop, “In the hearing of the prince and the Lords of his Majesty’s Council, did yield that one other month should be employed in her perfect cure, which new month began the 11th of this present May. During our attendance on his Majesty he used not one unkind or wrathful word of her, but mildly taxed her obstinacy, the conceit whereof I find did spring from such accidents as befell upon our first removes, reported unto him very untruly, with terms of violence offered by my lady to such as were used in that service. His Majesty’s resolution was that to Durham she should come, if he were king. We answered that we made no doubt of her obedience. Then he said, ‘Obedience is that required; which, being performed, I will do more for her than she expecteth.’ . . . The premier reason which moved his Majesty to the grant of this second month was her submission in a letter to his Highness, with all due acknowledgments of her recovery from the grave by time most graciously granted her by him. This letter was penned by her in the best terms (as she can do right well), and accompanied with matter best befitting his Highness and her. It was often read without offence, nay, I may

truly say even commended, by himself, with the applause of the prince and Council." The good doctor also says, "There is no fear among the Lords of any long stay with you, neither of her farther progress northward, but great assurance of the contrary."

So till the 11th June and not one day longer, had Arbella Seymour to work out her plans for love and liberty.

CHAPTER XVII

ESCAPE

(*June 1611*)

MARY TALBOT, Countess of Shrewsbury, had her mother's ungovernable temper; was in several ways an unscrupulous woman, and was cordially disliked by many people; but she had a staunch attachment to her sister Elizabeth's only child, and was prepared to endure courageously many hardships on her behalf. To her alone was due the initiative in arranging details of a plan of escape, in keeping all the various parties concerned in it in touch with every new development, and most important of all, in collecting and distributing the necessary funds. Arbella's servants had now been removed from about her, but "that trusty rogue" Crompton, and Anne Bradshaw her maid, undoubtedly had easy access to her whenever they wished, and were kept busily travelling backwards and forwards to London upon their mistress's business. Indeed, she received very lenient treatment all the time she was at East Barnet, and in spite of the "tears, swoons and sickness" which she still kept carefully in the foreground, the fine air, renewed hope, and comparative liberty she enjoyed brought her back a large share of health and strength. Only she and her faithful maid knew this, however. Croft and Moundford, kind though they were, must still be deceived into believing her incapable of moving; else would they consider it their duty to hurry her north, and so all her hopes would perish. She seems to have been allowed to receive visits from ladies in the neighbourhood, and a kind letter is preserved from Lady Chandos to Dr. Moundford, dated Good Friday, 1611. Lady Chandos was a daughter of Lady Kennedy, who as

the beautiful Elizabeth Bridges had been a favourite maid of honour with Queen Elizabeth, and a friend of Essex. She writes: "Doctor Moundford,—I desire the widow's prayer, with my humble service, may by you be presented to the Lady Arbella, who I hope God will so fortify her mind, as she will take this cross with such patience as may be to His pleasing, who, as this day signifies, took upon Him a good deal more for us; and when He seeth time He will send comfort to the afflicted. I pray you if you want for the honourable lady what is in this house, you will send for it; for most willingly the master and mistress of the house would have her ladyship command it. If the drink do like my lady, spare not to send. The knight and my daughter remember their kind commendations unto yourself. So I commit you to God, and rest as your friend, Francis Chandos. To my friend, Mr. Dr. Moundford, at Barnet."

This letter, like so many others, preached resignation, and Arbella was not resigned. Before resorting to extreme measures, her aunt, Lady Shrewsbury, had made one last effort to gain the King's ear through his favourite Carr, now Lord Rochester; but Rochester was in love with Lady Essex, the daughter of Lord Suffolk, who belonged to Northampton's party against Arbella; and so declared that "he would rather lose his life than deal in a matter so distasteful to his Majesty, and so cross to the duty and affection which he owed to the King more than to all the world." The sentiment was of course voiced only that it might reach the ear of James; and Northampton, who reported it, took care to add, "I protest to your Majesty that if it were possible for me to add one grain to that inestimable love which I bear him already, upon this demonstration of worth he should be sure of it." The words of both were told Arbella, who with a sigh confessed that "this uncomfortable answer from my Lord of Rochester moved her to think all labour lost in those ends which she affected for the satisfaction of her own mind in those matters." Henceforth there was no hope for her but in escape from England.

A good deal of difficulty was added to the enterprise in the necessarily simultaneous rescue of both Arbella and Seymour; since if one were left, he or she would be so straightly kept that no further attempts would be possible. Lady Shrewsbury, however, had a stout heart, and refused to be dismayed by any obstacles. She kept her plans very secret, since her own husband was on the King's Council, and had he obtained the slightest inkling of what was going on, would have felt it his duty to put a stop to all. But "My Lady of Shrewsbury," wrote Northampton to the King long after everything had been discovered, "was the only worker and contriver of the lady's Bedlam opposition against your Majesty's direction, which, besides our own knowledge, Mr. Chancellor of the Duchy hath infallibly demonstrated by signs and operations. It doth now most manifestly appear that her purse hath been the only instrument of her audacity to undertake and ability to contrive the plot of her escape, which should have been the beginning, or rather the foundation, of all the plots that were to follow. But the mystery was managed with so great art as in my judgment we shall never be able to prove more than that my Lady of Shrewsbury had by her traffic for a penny some kind of penny, and although we shall be able to prove that at this very time of her preparing means for her escape, and chiefly since the time of the lady's going down when you were at Windsor, the great part of the money hath been paid."

Money was in fact absolutely essential to success, and for those penurious times Arbella's intrepid aunt managed to scrape together a good round sum, which she conveyed to her niece through Crompton, who also took her a man's disguise. Crompton afterwards said that "his only part was the preparation of means and the receipt of monies, which in appearance were the pieces of such employments"; but he was useful in many other ways besides these. A gentleman attendant named Markham, who seems to have been given Arbella in place of Crompton, she had also won over as a friend; as well as Mrs. Adam, the "minister's wife," who had replaced Mrs. Bradshaw.

In all Lady Shrewsbury sent her niece £1400, £850 of which was ostensibly the price of some embroidery she possessed, worked by Mary, Queen of Scots, and "not worth an eighth part of it," contemptuously remarks Northampton; while the rest was to pay her debts before leaving for Durham. If, indeed, she had debts, they must have been left unpaid, for by Crompton's help Arbella procured another £1400 of her own, and with this and a pocketful of rare jewels she seemed well equipped for all emergencies.

The plotters looked no further forward than to effect a landing on the Continent, after which they must trust to Providence and hope to make friends for themselves; Arbella had never found this difficult. The fewer people let into the secret at this stage the better; and it could hardly be expected that any foreign prince should encourage the adventure, however willing he might be to welcome the fugitives once they had reached his territory. Rodney was instructed in the part Seymour was to play, and left to manage it for him; while Lady Shrewsbury herself undertook all details for her niece, though obliged to place the actual engineering of the escape in Crompton's hands, since it would have aroused suspicion for so great a lady to absent herself mysteriously at the time.

On the 24th May the Bishop of Durham wrote from Bishop Auckland to Salisbury concerning the expenses of his late journey with his prisoner, adding with some chagrin that he "could have wished the moneys had been left in his hands for Lady Arbella's charges." In fact, the good Bishop was a little hurt and considerably annoyed over the whole affair; and six months later wrote again to the Council to state stiffly that he was going to Bath to recruit after half a year's sickness and lameness, relics of his attendance upon her Ladyship. But at this time he certainly did not anticipate that his attendance was over; and, indeed, towards the end of May Arbella professed herself better in health, and resigned to obey the King's will and journey to Durham: she even named the 5th of June, a few days earlier than was necessary, for the date of her departure. The day before this, a Monday after-

noon, she confided to her attendant, Mrs. Adam, that she desired to bid a last farewell to her husband, who was in hiding not far away, that Mrs. Adam must help her to slip out in disguise, and that she would return in the morning. Fully believing this story, the woman yielded, promised to let no one enter her lady's chamber till she returned, and even helped her to assume the disguise which Crompton had brought some days before. Arbella drew "a pair of great French-fashioned hose over her petticoats, put on a man's doublet, a man-like peruke with long locks over her hair; a black hat, a black cloak, russet boots with red tops, and a rapier by her side": and thus attired, and having filled her pouch with money and jewels, she walked quietly out of the house in broad daylight, between three and four in the afternoon, attended by Markham, who was now quite as devoted to her as Crompton himself.

The walk before them was only a mile and a half, but it was so long since Arbella had attempted any exercise that, even leaning heavily on Markham's arm, she was well-nigh exhausted by the time the "sorry Inne" was reached, where Crompton awaited her with saddle horses; and here, indeed, she became "very sick and faint, so as the ostler that held their stirrups said: *That gentleman would hardly hold out to London*; yet, being set on a good gelding, astride in unwonted fashion, the stirring of the horse brought blood enough into her face, and so she rode on towards Blackwall." The river inn at Blackwall was reached by six o'clock, and she was lifted almost fainting from her horse. Here Seymour should have been waiting for her, but he had not arrived. The faithful Mrs. Bradshaw, however, was there, with Edward Reeves, and all the baggage belonging to both the prisoners that Rodney had been able to collect; and it was supposed that Seymour would appear at any moment. A French skipper named Corvé had been hired to wait in the Leigh roads for a party who would arrive about nightfall and would give him a certain password; and the plan had been that Arbella, Seymour, Rodney, Crompton, Reeves, Markham

and Mrs. Bradshaw should all meet together at Blackwall, and from thence take a boat down the river to Leigh. We have most of the particulars of this journey from a letter to Sir Ralph Winwood from Sir John More, his London agent; but for certain incidents the testimony of the watermen at Blackwall seems more likely to be correct.

For an hour and a half the party waited at the tavern without a sign of Seymour or Rodney, and it may be imagined, in her already agitated state, how slowly every moment must have passed to Arbella. She either changed into woman's clothes here, or left her hat and peruke behind, and threw on a dark cloak and hood, for the watermen describe her later as dressed thus. By half past seven the gentlemen of the party insisted that she must start, as it was growing dark, and it would already be difficult to hire a boat to take them so far: they had hoped all to be on board the French ship by nightfall. Arbella implored for half-an-hour's more grace, and reluctantly it was granted her. She could not imagine what disaster could have happened to Seymour, and it broke her heart even to seem thus to desert him. In an agonized silence the minutes ticked away, and at eight o'clock she was compelled to go, unless she wished to wait till morning. The river was not well lighted, and rowing after dark was full of danger. With tears and misgivings therefore she yielded. Reeves and Crompton hired two boats, into one of which entered Arbella, her maid, Markham and themselves: servants and baggage followed in the second. One man and another maid remained at the tavern to give word to Seymour in case he still came; and so the boats put off from shore. Five minutes after they started, the sun set, but there would be an hour of daylight yet.

Woolwich was passed and Gravesend reached. It was now pitch dark, for there was no moon; Leigh was a long way off yet, and the men refused to row further. Bribed with a double fare, they wavered, and finally proceeded as far as Tilbury, where they got something to drink, and this heartened them up, so that they did finally push on to Leigh, and got there about four on Tuesday morning.

Corvé's ship lay eight miles beyond Leigh, but for all they knew she might not have waited for them; and seeing a brig close at hand, Crompton hailed her, and begged her master, John Bright, to convey them to Calais, offering him a large sum of money if he would consent. Bright was bound for Berwick, and said he could not disobey orders, but on being questioned as to whether any French vessel had been sighted near, replied that he knew not for certain, but a strange ship lay about two miles further on. They thanked him and pulled on, and when they neared the ship, found that she was flying the flag agreed upon as a signal, and was, indeed, Corvé's vessel. At first Arbella hoped against hope that Seymour might have already arrived, but he was not there.

So strange and mysterious a party naturally awoke some curiosity in John Bright, who watched them through his glasses as they reached the French vessel, and saw them all go on board. Afterwards, his evidence was taken, and he described Reeves as "a man about forty years, with a long flaxen beard, something corpulent, and, as he remembered, in a suit of grey cloth, with a rapier and a dagger gilt. The other (Crompton) was younger, with a little black beard, who was the man that most desired the master to receive them and carry them for Calais, with large proffers for the passage, who, as he remembered, was in black apparel. The third man he did not notice, and therefore could not describe him. Of the women, one was bare-faced, in a black riding safeguard, with a black hat, having nothing on her head but a black hat and her hair. This last he took to be Moll Cutpurse, and thought that, if it were she, she had made some fault and was desirous of escape. The other woman sat close covered with a black veil or hood over her face and head so that he could not see her—only that under her mantle she had a white attire, and that, on pulling off her glove, a marvellous fair white hand was revealed." That pretty hand was poor Arbella's undoing.

Crompton must have breathed more freely now that

he had once got his mistress safely on the foreign ship. But with incredible imprudence, she still begged for delay and would not have the anchor raised lest her husband might even yet arrive. There was a high sea on, and the wind had been blowing east by south for four days past, so that it would in any case be difficult and take a long while to beat across to Calais. At last Crompton and Corvé refused any longer to listen to her entreaties, the sails were hoisted, and Arbella was carried away from the shores of England.

What now had happened to Seymour? Some extraordinary blunder seems to have been made with regard to the time of meeting, for he did not even leave the Tower till 8 o'clock, the moment when Arbella, a prey to hideous anxiety, was after her two hours' waiting at last dragged away from Blackwall by her faithful attendants. Otherwise Rodney seems to have contrived everything very cunningly and well. It might be imagined, from the ease with which Seymour had frequently slipped away from prison to spend a few hours with his wife, that his escape would be extremely simple; but in this case it was complicated by the fact that he wished to carry a large part of his valuables and effects with him, and it was not so easy to get all this stuff out of the Tower without arousing suspicion. On Sunday the 3rd June, Rodney engaged a room by St. Mary Overy's, where he had often lodged before, and immediately after sent a French manservant there with "a cloke, a capp, a cabbynett, and a fardele, all lapt in a white sheete, to be laid in his chamber," and all very heavy. He did not return for the night, and next morning the servant came again, with a buckram bag "fulle of stuffe." The landlady thought all this rather singular, but it was not her business to interfere with the vagaries of young men of fashion, so she said nothing. This was Monday. A little later in the morning, a tall flaxen-haired gentleman (Reeves), wearing a green doublet, purple hose and a cloak lined with purple velvet, called and explained to her that Mr. Rodney had taken the room, not for himself, but for "a gentlewoman of fashion,

by whom Mr. Rodney might receive much good ”; after which he went away and came back with a gentlewoman (Anne Bradshaw) whom the landlady describes as “ tall of person, not richly apparelled, and very pale : having a wart on her face upon the cheek under the eye.” A waterman was then called in, who took all the things deposited there to St. Tooley’s Stairs, and this being all finished by two o’clock, the gentleman and his companion, after looking cautiously down the street to make sure they were not watched, slipped quietly away. The landlady’s servant, of course, followed them to see what happened next, and reported that they had gone to Pickleherring by the Tower, and there taken a boat. We know that they were already at Blackwall with the baggage when Arbella arrived there at six o’clock.

So far so good. Seymour alone had now to be extricated. Rodney told no one of his plans, although it was with some compunction that he deceived his young cousin Francis, William Seymour’s younger brother, who was known to be friendly with the prisoners, and who was actually lodging in the same house with himself. But Francis might be frightened at the magnitude of the responsibility if he knew, and perhaps even think it his duty to inform his grandfather, who would most certainly report the whole matter to the Council. Rodney meant to take no risks, so he kept his arrangements to himself, but left a letter of explanation for Francis, to be delivered on the Tuesday morning, when they both hoped to be far beyond pursuit. He contrived to send Seymour as disguise a carter’s frock and whip, and a wig and beard of heavy dark hair; and late on Monday afternoon, a cart full of billets of wood was driven into the Tower and up to the watergate, where it stopped for some time while the driver went in to speak to the officials. Seymour had taken to his bed the last two days, saying he was ill with a violent toothache; but he now jumped up, informed his valet or barber, just as Arbella had done her maid, that he had a chance of seeing his wife; and persuaded him to let no one into his room till his return, on the pretext that he was

still sick and must not be disturbed. He then put on the carter's disguise, and just as the driver went back to his cart, walked boldly into the street, and followed it down Water Lane and through the Byward Gate, where he met Rodney, who was waiting for him with a horse and a boat at Tower Stairs. It was eight o'clock already, but neither seems to have realized how fatally late this would make them at the meeting-place. Seymour threw off his disguise in a convenient archway, jumped on the horse, and rode to Blackwall, while Rodney pulled down the river, and met him again there an hour later. Here they heard Arbella and her party had already left, so they took a boat and followed down to Leigh, but night having already fallen, they were considerably delayed, and the French vessel had disappeared by the time they should have reached her. Rodney's French servant and another man were with them. They sighted a collier bound for Newcastle, and since their own boat was too small, they hired a little fishing boat for twenty shillings and sailed out to her, when Rodney demanded to see the master. The master was surprised at being accosted by this "gentleman in a full suit of red satin, laid with gold and silver lace," but, more accommodating than John Bright, he consented for the handsome sum of £40 to take the party across to Calais before continuing his voyage; and so they all came aboard. Rodney gave his own name, but said his younger companion was William See, and that they had got into trouble over a quarrel, and so wished to leave England for a time. The wind, as we know, was not favourable for Calais, and on Tuesday night they had to put in at Harwich, where they at last determined to give up the idea of France, and make for Ostend instead. Here then at eight o'clock on Friday morning Seymour and Rodney landed, and learning that Arbella had not reached this port, they pushed on to Bruges, "sending a messenger along the coasts to hearken after the arrival of the lady." So their share of the escape was safely accomplished.

But Rodney had made one blunder. The rare scruple of one usually unscrupulous worked fatally for the unhappy

lady whom it was the desire of all to rescue. His letter to Francis Seymour was delivered as intended on the morning of Tuesday the 5th, and though it alluded only in veiled terms to the contemplated escape, the young man was able to grasp quickly enough at what had happened. Now whether he was offended at not having been earlier trusted, or whether he had inherited his grandfather's caution pushed almost to the verge of cowardice, or whether he honestly thought his duty to the King demanded treachery to his brother it is impossible now to tell. Perhaps he merely lost his head. But in any case he acted almost exactly as old Lord Hertford had done eight years before, and promptly betrayed the trust reposed in him to the very persons from whom it should have been most strictly kept.

He went first to the Tower to make sure that his brother had gone, and insisted, in spite of the servant's remonstrance, on pushing into the bed-chamber. The servant was then obliged to explain what had happened, and while he yet spoke Sir William Waad entered. Even now Francis might have saved the situation, but instead he showed the Lieutenant Rodney's letter, and together they hurried off with it to Greenwich, where the news was broken to Salisbury, the King, and the Privy Council. Great was the consternation with which it was received. Francis was strictly examined before the Council, it being considered not at all certain that he himself was not a party to the plot, a suspicion which left the foolish youth exceedingly aggrieved, since, as he wrote to his grandfather "I am as clear of their release, or of any of their practices, as is the child that was but yesterday borne." He described his examination as something thus: "Q. How did he come by the letter? A. He had received it from Robert Stafford on Tuesday morning. Q. Why did he not instantly carry it to the Treasurer? A. The letter did not directly say his brother was gone, though there was some presumption of it, and before he would be the reporter of an affair of that consequence, he would be sure of it, declaring that, had he not had proof with his own eyes, he

never would have believed it. *Q.* Had not Rodney slept with him the night before? and what conference had they? *A.* Rodney had slept with him, but had not communicated his intentions. They had often slept together, they were kinsmen. *Q.* Did he know where the fugitives were bound? *A.* He had not any idea." After this he was told to consider himself under arrest at Hertford House, where in very ill-humour he employed his time describing all that had happened in a long letter to his grandfather, adding sententiously his surprise at the conduct of his brother and sister-in-law; "knowing it would be their utter undoing, a grief unto their friends, and good to none, most hurt unto themselves."

Panic is the only word to describe James's feelings at what he thought this ominous news. Long ago, before he came to the throne, he had distrusted Arbella; later, her gentleness and charm had lulled his fears; but now it seemed to him that his earlier thoughts had been just. She and her husband had fled abroad to raise a party against him and his dynasty; separately, each had claims to the throne, united, they were doubly strong, and if a child were born of the union, that child's right would be stronger still. Of course, Arbella had become a secret Roman Catholic, her proselytizing aunt would see to that, and thus all the foreign powers would lend her their support. But the fugitives had only had a day's start yet, they might have met with delays, and there was a chance they could be recaptured still. A Proclamation was at once "first conceived in very bitter terms, but by my lord treasurer's moderation, seasoned at the print" writes More: and this was how it was finally given to the world.

"June 4. 1611. Whereas we are given to understand that the Lady Arbella and William Seymour, second son to the Lord Beauchamp, being for divers great and heinous offences committed, the one to our Tower of London, and the other to a special guard, have found the means by the wicked practices of divers lewd persons, as, namely, Markham, Crompton, Rodney, and others, to break

prison, and make escape on Monday, the third day of June, with an intent to transport themselves into foreign parts. We do hereby straitly charge and command all persons whatsoever, upon their allegiance and duty, not only to forbear to receive, harbour or assist them in their passage any way, as they will answer it at their perils; but, upon the like charge and pain, to use the best means they can for their apprehension and keeping them in safe custody, which we will take as an acceptable service. Given at Greenwich, the fourth day of June. Per ipsum REGEM."

In addition to this, letters were at once dispatched in hot haste to the Governor of Calais bidding him stop the truants if they landed there; and Mr. Trumbull, British Ambassador to the Netherlands, was ordered to demand an immediate audience of the Archdukes (i.e. the Infanta Isabella and her husband), and deliver a letter from the King; while reminding them that his Majesty required, on their friendship, if Arbella and Seymour entered their country, "that both their persons and their company may be stayed, until, upon advertisement of it, they may further hear from his Majesty. Though you may conclude that, excepting the scorn and example of so great pride and animosity where his Majesty's only clemency hath vied his own offence, there is nothing in these persons relative to themselves to hold them other than contemptible creatures." Similar letters were sent to the King and the Queen Regent of France, "all written," continues More; "with harsher ink than now if they were to do I presume they should be, especially that to the Archdukes, which did seem to presuppose their course to tend that way; and all three describing the offence in black colours, and pressing their sending back without delay. Indeed, the general belief was that they intended to settle themselves in Brabant, and that under the favour of the Popish faction: but now I rather think they will be most pitied by the puritans, and that their course did wholly tend to France. And though for the former I had only mine own corrigible imagination, yet for the latter many

potent reasons do concur : as that the ship that did attend them was French ; the place that Mr. Seymour made for was Calais ; the man that made their perukes was a French clockmaker, who is fled with them, and in the ship is said to be found a French post with letters from the Ambassador. The proclamation for the oath is by divers found strange, for that it is so general, but where love is, loyalty will not be found wanting."

Next, a large number of people were arrested. Lady Shrewsbury was sent to the Tower, and one can imagine the angry disappointment with which this news, the first she had of the discovery of her plot, reached her. Good Sir James Croft was sent to the Fleet ; Dr. Moundford and Mrs. Adam made "close prisoners in the Gatehouse," while Batten, William Seymour's barber-valet, being already in the Tower, was "committed to the dungeon" there. Other servants and watermen were seized on suspicion. Lord Shrewsbury was put under guard in his own house, and Lord Hertford sent for to appear before the Council. "If he be found healthful enough to travel, he must not delay his coming." This unhappy old man, on receiving the long letter sent him by his grandson Francis from Hertford House, promptly forwarded it to Salisbury to demonstrate his own innocence, explaining in a note that his hands had shaken so while reading it that he had dropped some hot wax from his candle upon the paper and burnt away a corner of it. The burn may still be seen. "My Lord," he writes ; "this last night, at xi of the clock, ready to go to bed, I received this letter from my stepson, Frank Seymour, which I send your Lordship here inclosed. A letter no less troublesome to me than strange to think I should, in these my last days, be grandfather of a child that, instead of patience and tarrying the Lord's leisure (lessons that I learned and prayed for when I was in the same place where our lewdly heir is now escaped), would not tarry for the good hour of favour to come from a gracious and merciful King, as I did, and enjoyed in the end (though long first) from a most worthy and noble Queen, but hath plunged himself

further into his Highness's just displeasure. To whose Majesty I do by these lines earnestly pray your Lordship to signify most humbly from me how distasteful this his foolish and boyish action is unto me, and that as at the first upon his examination before your Lordships and his Majesty afterward, nothing was more offensive unto me, mistaking altogether the unfitness and inequality of the match, and the handling of it afterward worse, so do I condemn this as worst of all in them both. Thus, my Lord, with an unquiet mind, to think (as before) I should be grandfather to any child that hath so much forgotten his duty as he hath now done, and having slept never a wink this night (a bad medicine for one that is not fully recovered of a second great cold I took), I leave your Lordship with very loving commendations to the heavenly protection. From Letley, this Thursday morning, at 4 of the clock, the 6th of June, 1611. Your Lordship's most assured loving friend, Hertford.

“ Postsc.—As I was reading my said stepson's letter my size took (as your Lordship may perceive) unto the bottom of the letter; but the word missing that is burnt was ‘ Tower ’ to acquaint.”

Meanwhile no attempt had so far been made to follow the culprits themselves, which one would have thought might have been the first step taken. The Earl of Northampton, Arbella's enemy of old, did all he could to inflame the King's mind against her, and add to his alarm; but the old Admiral, Lord Nottingham, wrote to Salisbury that, the wind being east by south for some days past, the fugitives could not have got far, and were probably not yet past the Downs or Margate: but as a matter of fact, “ England will find no loss by their absence. . . . The best that I do think, as it falleth out, is that it do not appear to the world that there is here any account made of them.” Every one but the King himself saw how simple a matter the whole thing was, and how it had no political significance whatever, but he was terrified, and with him, alas, his son Prince Henry, who thus failed his fair cousin in her hour of direst need. “ Our Scots and English,”

writes More, "differ much in opinion upon this point. These do hold that if this couple should have escaped, the danger was not like to have been very great, in regard that their pretensions are so many degrees removed, and they ungraceful [i.e. out of grace or favour] both in their Persons and their Houses: so as a hot Alarm taken in the Matter will make them more Illustrious in the World's Eye than now they are, or (being let alone) ever would have been. But the others aggravate their Offence in so strange a manner, as that it might be compared to the Powder Treason; and so tis said fill his Majesty with fearful Imaginations, and with him the Prince, who cannot easily be removed from any settled Opinion."

By midnight on Tuesday, Phineas Pette, the King's shipwright, relates that a King's messenger came galloping up to bid him "to man the *Light Horseman* with twenty musqueteers, and to run out as low as the Nore head to search all shippes, barks, and other vessells, for the Lady Arbella." The order was obeyed, and not only ships, but every house in Leigh was ransacked in vain: on being assured of which Pette returned himself to Greenwich to acquaint the King. But Nottingham and Salisbury had already commissioned Admiral Sir William Monson to take the chase in hand, and Monson was no man to let the grass grow on his footsteps. He hastened himself to Blackwall, questioned the watermen there, and soon heard of the strange happenings at the tavern the night before, learning that one at least of frequent visitors during the last few days had been recognized as Lady Grey, Lady Shrewsbury's daughter and Arbella's cousin. Even while he listened to this tale, some men pulled ashore from a ship just come up the river, and related how a French barque in Leigh roads had taken a strange party on board at daybreak, and soon afterwards had sailed for Calais. Monson waited to hear no more. He sent a hasty message to Salisbury, and another to the Admiral commanding in the Downs, put six men and some shot into an oyster boat and bade them pull down the Thames in pursuit as fast as they could go, rowed across to Greenwich,

got a royal ship despatched to the Flanders coast, and went out himself in a little fishing boat to watch what happened.

To the *Adventure*, sent from the Downs, it was that the prize fell. "Under the South Sundhead," writes her captain, Griffin Cockett, to the Admiral; "we saw a small sail, which we chased, and proving little wind, we sent our boat with shot and pikes, and half channel over our boat did overtake them." Corvé's ship indeed it was, which "lay lingering for Mr. Seymour," says More, with the luckless Arbella and her company on board. The French skipper threw out all his sail, and made a gallant run for it, but the wind had dropped and his vessel hardly moved. Once overtaken, and thirteen shot fired straight into her, no further resistance was possible. Corvé struck his flag, and Arbella stepped forward and surrendered herself a prisoner to the King. Demanded where was her husband, she replied that she knew not, but trusted he was safe, and in any case his escape entirely consoled her for her own misfortune. So, concludes More, "In this Barke was the Lady taken with her Followers, and brought back towards the Tower: Not so sorry for her own Restraynt, as she should be glad if Mr. Seimour might escape, whose Welfare she protesteth to affect much more than her owne."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TOWER (1611-12)

SEYMOUR as we know did escape, though it is miraculous how he contrived to do so. He did not land at Ostend till Friday the 8th, so at the time of all this hue and cry must have been either in Harwich or at sea. But if one only of the culprits was to be seized, no doubt James preferred that it should be his cousin. When the *Adventure* returned with her prize, Monson would not allow any of the prisoners to leave the ship until he had learned "His Majesty's directions how to dispose of my lady, for that I am unwilling she should go ashore until I have further authority; but in the meantime, she shall not want anything the shore can afford, or any other honourable usage." James ordered her to be sent at once to the Tower, while Crompton, Markham, Reeves, Kirton, Corvé and Anne Bradshaw, were committed to various prisons, until they could be examined, and the whole affair thoroughly sifted.

Arbella and her aunt, Lady Shrewsbury, were examined together before the Privy Council, for the King was still anxious as far as possible to keep the affair private; but this very desire enraged the hot-tempered Countess beyond words. "On Saturday last," writes More, dating the 18th June, "the Countess of Shrewsbury was lodged in the Tower, where she is like long to rest as well as the Lady Arbella. The last-named Lady answered the Lords at her Examination with good judgment and discretion; but the other is said to be utterly without Reason, crying out that all is but tricks and giggs; that she will answer nothing in private, and yf she have offended the Lawe will answer it in publicke. She is said to have amassed

a great Somme of Money to some ill use, 20,000 pounds are known to be in her Cash; and that she had made Provision for more Bills of Exchange to her Niece's use, than she had knowledge of. And though the Lady Arbella hath not yet been found inclinable to Popery, yet her Aunt made account belike that being beyond the Seas in the hands of Jesuits and Priests, either the Stroke of their Arguments or the Pinch of Poverty might force her to the other side."

It must have been a strange meeting between aunt and niece; and in spite of all her faults, some cordial admiration is due to Mary Talbot for her firm partisanship for this unhappy kinswoman. It was a period when nearest and dearest, members of one family, and even husband and wife, would in a like case betray one another and believe they did service to the State; but Lady Shrewsbury deceived herself with no such cheap morality. She loved Arbella, and stood by her in her darkest hour; though Northampton, writing to the King, remarks that "Lady Arbella dares not clear her by oath, though she clears all foreign princes." Nevertheless, not much could be proved against her, and she had besides powerful friends: it was never supposed that she would be kept long in the Tower. She was given a few good rooms in the "Queen's House," the best quarter available, but grumbled greatly because she had no servants, and some of the windows were broken, ceilings cracked, and the furniture old and shabby. She complained to her husband, who wrote to Salisbury: "I beseech your Lordship to give order, in writing or otherwise as it pleaseth you, that there may presently be wainscot leaves set up for the nether window in those 2 rooms where my wife liveth and eateth, and so many partition boards to be set up before the doors as in all would make but one small portal, and a piece of a roof mended not half a yard broad and one yard long, at which now the skies may be seen. This is her request to me this morning, to be a suitor for to your Lordship; if this may pass by immediate warrant I desire it, or else not."

Northampton visited the Tower to see if what Lady Shrewsbury said was true, and behaved in a very insulting manner to her; but ultimately matters were improved. Her brother Sir Charles Cavendish was permitted to send her some verses of his own composition; and writing from Welbeck on the 19th June to one Henry Butler, who seems much attached to her, he says: "Good Henry Butler, I cannot blame you to be greatly grieved at this case, knowing how much she loves you for your trust and love to her; but my lord putteth me in hope that her abode there will not be long, and that shortly she shall have the liberty of friends and servants to come to her. She is appointed the Queen's lodgings, and hath three or four fair rooms to walk in. God send her well out of them, as I hope in God she shall. Commend me to Mr. Wingfield, and be you both of good cheer, for I understand she had not gone thither if she had answered the Lords, so for that contempt she suffereth." This optimistic view was shared by her husband, who, though not held responsible for her doings, was still under arrest in his house and unable to help her. Gilbert had been married to his Mary by her masterful mother when he was only fifteen, but on the whole they seem to have suited one another very well, and in spite of their difference in religion, were sincerely attached. He, writing also to Butler a few days later, says, "For my wife, as I wrote you in the P.S. of my second letter, so I assure you it is the worst of her estate. God grant her health and patience for a time, and then it will pass over, with God's help, as many greater things have done." By the 28th June, Charles Cavendish writes, that "The King hath granted six of my lady's servants to repair to her at all convenient time, and Mistress Anne to attend her continually there." But she remained defiant, and it was two years before she was set free to return to her husband.

For the other prisoners, Crompton and Markham were put to the torture, but divulged very little; indeed, there was nothing to tell, since all their accomplices had been already seized, except Rodney and Seymour himself.

Crompton was released two years later, in November 1613, and Markham probably earlier. Sir James Croft wrote a pathetic letter to Salisbury on the 13th June from the Fleet prison, "soliciting enlargement, protesting his entire innocence of Lady Arbella's escape, and hoping he might not lose the King's favour and the reward of his thirty-six years service." He, too, and Moundford, with all the rest were evidently shortly set free, since we hear no more of them as prisoners.

But upon Arbella herself the Tower walls had closed for ever. It is doubtful whether she fully realized this at first, though she can have had but very little hope of release. Fear is a hard master, and fear drove James to persecute her; there would be no more chances of escape. So long as Seymour remained free, she must be bound. She was glad, unselfishly glad, of his freedom; but she must often have looked back with longing upon the days when she had thought herself unhappy, at Sir Thomas Parry's house at Lambeth; but when, since her husband could come to her, joy was never very far away. Now the seas rolled between them, and they should never meet more.

She was given the rooms in the Lieutenant's lodgings where her grandmother, Margaret of Lennox, had been imprisoned for the crime of her son Darnley's marriage with Mary of Scotland. They were not ill rooms, but dreary to hopelessness. When first sent there, she dispatched a "Memorial to the Council," making certain requests concerning her household.

"The Lady Arbella desireth that her servants that are now in the Tower, or so many of them as shall be thought fit, to be allowed to her. That Peter, who attended Mr. Seymour, an ancient servant of hers, may be her bottle-man. To have herewith another servant, an embroiderer, whose name is Roger Fretwell. For a woman, she desireth the Lady Chaworth. Her desire is that Mr. Yelverton may receive her money and jewels. That Smyth, her servant, may have access unto her. There must of

necessity be linen bought, both for her wearing, for sheets and table linen, whereof there is not any amongst her stuff. She hath xxxij servants, for which some order would be taken.”

This Memorial is undated, and some have supposed it to refer to Arbella's first imprisonment in Parry's house, but this seems unlikely, as she had all reasonable necessaries there; while, as corroborative evidence, a letter from Waad to Salisbury of the 11th June, repeats that Arbella particularly desires the company of Lady Chaworth, and adds that he awaits directions as to whether this is to be allowed. It was not; and one only of her servants was later granted her. There had been too much fetching and carrying of devoted adherents, and henceforth she was to be surrounded by unsympathetic strangers. But some two years later the Council sent an order to Waad to the effect that “Whereas Samuell Smyth, servant unto the Lady Arbella, being employed by her ladyship in the managing of her private estate, hath been an humble suitor unto us that he might be suffered to have access unto her ladyship as well to give her an accompt of his proceedings therein as to receive her further directions for ordering the same. These are therefore to will and request you to suffer the said Samuell Smyth to repayre to the said Lady Arbella at convenient and seasonable tymes, to conferr with her about her sayd private affairs, so the same be doune in your presence and hearing, for which this shall be your warrant.”

When taken prisoner on the *Adventure*, Arbella had with her a very large sum of money and a quantity of valuable jewels, on learning which James hastily issued a Warrant to the Lords of the Council, directing “That they cause all such sums of money as are to be defrayed by his Majesty for the charges of apprehension of the Lady Arbella and her company, and her bringing up, to be paid out of such gold as hath been found upon her or in her company, or which hereafter shall be found to have been upon her or in her company at the time of her escape.” The valuables

were delivered to Sir William Bowyer, who was told to inventory the jewels, and “take them to the Tower, and there, in the company and presence of the Lieutenant, show the said gold and jewels to the Lady Arbella, and to inform yourself from her ladyship to whom all the said gold and jewels belong; which, if she inform you they are hers, you are to detain them to her use, issuing and delivering no part thereof upon any warrant from her ladyship until you first acquaint the chancellor of the exchequer; and if the Lady Arbella says some is not hers, but belongs to her servants and other persons, we do require you to deliver them unto these persons, taking from them a sufficient acquittance for your charge.” There was £868 in gold, but Arbella declared that several of the jewels were missing, and must have been stolen since they had been taken from her. Of these the following list was made:—

“A note of such jewels as my Lady Arbella affirmeth to be wanting, and desiereth they may be inquired after. *Item*—A poignard diamond ring. *Item*—A flower de luce set with diamonds, which she thinketh is in a little box of wood, and left amongst her jewels. *Item*—In the same box was a ring wherein was set a little sea-water green stone called an emeryn. *Item*—A little jewel like a horn, with a great yellow stone called a jacynth, with opals and rubies. *Item*—A jewel like a star, set with opals. *Item*—A piece of a chain of gold, set with rubies and pearls. *Item*—Some four pearls set upon a cord, with eight other less pearls. *Item*—A watch left in Mistress Bradshaw’s trunk at Barnet. *Item*—A little chest with wares.”

After this, Bowyer and Yelverton, whom Arbella wished to act for her, were directed to sell the goods at cost price, and use the money to pay her debts.

Meanwhile, ever since her capture, great was the King’s anxiety still to discover the whereabouts of her companion in disgrace. Many reports were spread, but it was at last ascertained that Seymour had reached Bruges, where the Archdukes had received him kindly, and even sent an Ambassador on his behalf to England, who, says More,

“hath carried himself very strangely ever since his arrival. He hath had but one audience of his Majesty, and that private. He hath brought a letter from the Archduke in favour of Mr. Seymour, no less strange than the rest, that his Majesty would be pleased to pardon so small a fault as a clandestine marriage and to suffer his wife and him to live together.” James was always much at the mercy of public opinion, and though he had no intention of relaxing poor Arbella’s punishment, he thought it politic now to excuse his conduct to these foreign princes, who plainly thought him guilty of cruel exaggeration; so he made Salisbury write to Trumbull, bidding him now forbear “to urge and press this matter any further, but leave them to do therein what themselves shall best advise; this being a thing of no such consequence as that his Majesty will make any extraordinary contestation for it, but attend their own motions and judge accordingly.” As to Seymour himself, Trumbull was to take no notice of him, except to “carry always a watchful eye to observe what entertainment he doth find there; how he is respected; to whom he most applies himself; who especially resort unto him, and what course he purposeth to take either for his stay or his remove. And, as you can have any means, let him know thus much, that he will deceive himself if ever he thinks to find favour whilst he liveth under any of the territories of Spain, Rome, or of the Archdukes; all which places all that are ill-affected only find residence and favour.” Having thus delivered the King’s message, Salisbury very angrily adds on his own account that though he had pleaded Seymour’s cause upon his *first failing*, “I am now neither willing to remember that I have done him any courtesies, neither mean to entertain any acknowledgment of them to me. And, therefore, if he hath any purpose to write hither to make his peace by the mediation of his friends, let him address his letters either to the Lords in general or else to those in whom he hath a particular interest, for you may assure him that for mine own part I am resolved not to receive any letters from him that are directed to me in particular.”

Seymour soon after left Bruges for Paris, and it was thought he intended to proceed to Venice; so Dudley Carleton, Ambassador there, was instructed to request the "Prince of Venice" to detain and deliver him up if he should enter his dominions. To this the prince readily agreed; and, writes Carleton, "I thought it not amiss to add . . . that his Majesty's pursuit of this business was not for any extraordinary consequence or doubt of any danger that might proceed of this young man's person, but for just indignation that one of such disparity of years, blood and means, should presume, contrary both to word and oath, not only to steal a march with one so near his Majesty in blood, but likewise to break prison and fly away, whereas his restraint was in no way severe, but only (for such time as his Majesty should think fit) to cause a separation." Seymour, however, had no intention of going to Venice. He remained in Paris, where Rodney joined him, and where he received constant letters from his grandfather, full of weak expostulation and impotent anger, and written less, one cannot help feeling, for the edification of William than for the approval of Salisbury, to whom every one was humbly submitted before posting to the "disobedient, unfortunate grandchild." To Salisbury himself Hertford confided, "I could wish young Rodney were removed away from him, being an unsettled vain youth, like to do much more hurt than good about him." And later, on the 3rd November, he writes: "I have heretofore moved your Lordship by my former letters, that young Rodney may be drawn away from my grandchild, not only for fear his looseness may do more hurt by his society than any care of other can do good, but for that I understand his friends give him no maintenance, and by that means he is like to be so great a burthen for my grandchild's small means, and do therefore very earnestly pray your Lordship to take some speedy course he may be drawn from thence with this opportunity."

Later came a rumour that Seymour had become a Roman Catholic, and this much agitated the old man, who felt that if it were true, his grandson's last hope of

forgiveness was gone. In great haste he informed Salisbury that he was sending John Pelling, his chaplain and Seymour's former tutor, out to Paris to "make him find his error before he should be confirmed or settled in the devilish bloody Jesuitical doctrine." But the rumour was untrue; and by November Hertford remarks that his sorrow for his grandchild's loss "is, thanks be to God, almost overcome"; and also that "sithence I find hope of good conformity in his carriage toward his most excellent Majesty and the State, who may in time restore him to grace, and that I understand his Majesty is pleased I should do so, I am content merely to encourage him in a good course so long as his behaviour shall be well approved by his Majesty and the State, out of my poor decayed estate to allow him the same means his Majesty and your Lordship were pleased I should do when he was first committed to the Tower, which was £200 per annum." It seems, therefore, that some hope of pardon had been held out to Seymour; and in any case he had now a comfortable allowance, and counted so surely upon the King's favour, that in December he was bold enough to request that Sir William Waad should forward him the clothes and furniture he had left behind in the Tower.

Waad writes to Salisbury in great indignation. Never, he declares, "had any serving in this place so troublesome and burdensome a charge as I have had in those few years I have served here, both for number of dangerous prisoners, and others of great quality. And I hope his excellent Majesty and your Lordship will not judge me unworthy of those benefits my predecessors have always enjoyed. For if Mr. Seymour had been by order discharged out of his place, or died here, he must have left all his stuff, plate, books and other things whatsoever behind him. And I hope it is not meant his escape (of which here I will say no more) shall be construed to his benefit and to my disadvantage." He then states that Seymour had with him nothing of his own or his "honourable grandfather's," but "either from the Lady Arbella, or bought by me, or yet unpaid for"; and declares that the prisoner managed

to sell most things of value before he went, and that the rest are due to himself as not nearly equal in value to the sums he had disbursed for Seymour, and never been repaid. Probably Waad had already seized and sold everything he could lay hands on. But "For the books," he declares, "which are valued at £30, besides the worke of Zancheus, and an Italian and Spanish Bible, the rest are English books and pamphlets of no value." "No penny since Christmas last" had been paid for his diet; and again, "My wife laid out for Mr. Seymour £10 for him, whereof he never paid penny"; while the apothecary's bill for the year came to £32 16s., "whereof there are divers cordials, almond milks, juleps, electuaries, and other things very costly." Seymour, however, was not the only prisoner to accuse Waad of dishonesty, and as he was disliked by all, and ultimately discharged from the Lieutenantship of the Tower some eighteen months later on a charge of embezzling jewels from Arbella, one cannot accept his word alone to prove that the young man was extravagant and callous.

Many have blamed Seymour for his extraordinary inaction in Paris while his wife remained so close a prisoner in the Tower; but, indeed, it is not easy to see what else he could have wisely done. To return would not have helped Arbella, since he could never have come near enough to see her, and would merely have surrendered himself to another prison, sure now to be placed as far from her as possible; whilst so long as one of them remained at large it was always possible, if unlikely, that the other might elude the vigilance of her guards and join him. Another double escape could never have been contrived. And there is no doubt that so long as he was in Paris they managed occasionally to correspond. But argue as plausibly as we may, not one of us but in his heart feels Seymour's attitude to have been weak and cowardly. There are moments in life when caution and prudence should be thrown to the winds, when two hearts that truly love will dare all to come to one another; and in this noble recklessness the Earl of Hertford's grandson

failed miserably. He had never been worthy of Arbella; from the beginning she had had to make excuses for him, and though she would have died sooner than breathe it, the knowledge of his weakness, now that she was thus hopelessly shut away from him, must have preyed deeply upon her mind, and early reduced it to despair.

Her second imprisonment was rigorous; lightened by no friendly faces, warmed by no hope of love and freedom. She had been gravely ill, it will be remembered, at Barnet; for weeks had never left her room, scarcely her bed, and the exertion, excitement and anxiety of her escape had sapped all the little strength left her. Physically exhausted and mentally bewildered, she was carried back to the Tower, where her servants were not allowed to attend her, no comforts and few necessaries were furnished her, and she wandered about her room or lay stupefied upon her bed for hours at a time, a prey to all the darkest visions imagination could call up. Struggling gallantly with her weakness, she wrote, during the first months of her imprisonment, letters to all her friends and many people of rank and influence whom she scarcely knew, imploring their intercession with the King on her behalf; at last only asking humbly for the merest creature comforts. To James himself she sent some more of the dainty needlework at which her pretty fingers were so clever, pitiful reminder of a time when he not only loved, but admired his gentle cousin; but this time the gift was sternly returned. Of her letters the following have been preserved.

Lady Arbella Seymaure to Lord — (probably Lord Salisbury).

“ MY LORD,

“ The nobleness of your nature and the good opinion it hath pleased your lordship to hold of me heretofore, emboldeneth me to beseech your lordship to enter into consideration of my distress, and to be touched with the misery I am in for want of his Majesty’s favour, whose clemency is such that, if it would please ye to make my grief known, and how nearly it toucheth my heart

that it hath been my hard fortune to offend his Majesty, I cannot doubt but it would gain me both mitigation of the hard doom, and mercy in some measure to yield comfort to my soul, overwhelmed with the extremity of grief which hath almost brought me to the brink of the grave. I beseech your lordship deal so with me as my prayer may gain you God's reward, for His sake, though it be but a cup of cold water. I mean any small hope of intercession of his Majesty's displeasure shall be most thankfully received by me. And I doubt not but, if it please your lordship to try your excellent gift of speech, his Majesty will lend a gracious ear to your lordship, and I shall rest ever bound to pray for your lordship's happiness, who now myself rest the most unfortunate and afflicted creature living,

“ A. S.”

Lady Arbella Seymaure to some unknown person.

“ SIR,

“ Though you be almost a stranger to me, but only by sight, yet the good opinion I generally hear to be held of your worth, together with the great interest you have in my Lord of Northampton's favour, makes me thus far presume of your willingness to do a poor afflicted gentlewoman a good office (if in no other respect, yet because I am a Christian) as to further me with your best endeavours to his lordship, that it will please him to help me out of this great distress and misery, and regain me his Majesty's favour, which is my chiefest desire. Wherein his lordship may do a deed acceptable to God and honourable to himself, and I shall be infinitely bound to his lordship and beholden to you, who now, till I receive some comfort from his Majesty, rest the most sorrowful creature living,

“ ARBELLA SEYMAURE.”

Another to an unknown person.

“ MY LO.,

“ My extremity constraining me to labour to all my friends to become suitors to his Ma^{ty} for his pardon

of my fault, and my weakness not permitting me to write particularly, I have made choice of your Lo., humbly beseeching you to move as many as have any compassion of my affliction to join in humble mediation to his Ma^{ty}. to forgive me the most penitent and sorrowful creature that breathes,

“ Your distressed Cousin,

“ A. S.”

Lady Arbella Seymour to (probably) Viscount Fenton. This draft is full of erasures, and much crossed and altered.

“ MY LORD,

“ The long acquaintance betwixt us, and the good experience of your honourable dealing heretofore maketh me not only hope but be most assured, that if you knew my most discomfortable and distressed estate you would acquaint his Majesty withal and consequently procure my relief and redress as you have done othertimes. I have been sick even unto the death, from which it hath pleased God miraculously to deliver me for this present danger, but find myself so weak [by reason I have wanted those ordinary helps whereby most others in my case, be they never so poor or unfortunate soever, are preserved alive at least for charity; that unless I may be suffered to have those about me that I may trust, this sentence that my lord treasurer pronounced after his Majesty's refusing that trifle of my work, by your persuasion, as I take it, will prove the certain and apparent cause of my death. Whereof I then thought good to advertise you that you both may the better be prepared in case you, or either of you, have possessed the King with such opinions of me, as thereupon I shall be suspected and restrained till help come too late, and be assured that neither physician nor other but whom I think good shall come about me whilst I live till I have his Majesty's favour, without which I desire not to live. And if you remember of old I dare to die so I be not guilty of my own death, and oppress others with my ruin too, if there be no other way, as God forbid, to whom I commit you,

and rest assuredly as heretofore, if you be the same to me,

“ Your lordship’s faithful friend,
“ A. S.”

“ I can get neither clothes, nor posset ale, for example, nor anything but ordinary diet, nor complement fit for a sick body in my case, when I call for it, not so much as a glister, saving your reverence.”

The letter was finally sent as above, though Arbella first crossed out the words from “ so weak ” to the end, and intended instead to insert the following: “ That unless it please his Majesty to show me mercy, and that I may receive from your lordship at least some hope of regaining his Majesty’s favour, again, it will not be possible for me to undergo the great burden of his princely displeasure. Good my lord, consider, the fault cannot be uncommitted, neither can any more be required of any earthly creature but confession and most humble submission, which, if it should please your lordship to present to his Majesty, I cannot doubt but his Majesty would be pleased to mitigate his displeasure, and let me receive comfort. I wish your lordship would in a few lines understand my misery, for my weakness is such that writing is very painful to me, and cannot be pleasant to any to read. From your hand, my lord, I received the first favour, which favour, if I may obtain from your lordship’s hand in my greatest necessity, I shall ever acknowledge myself bound to you for it, and the rest of my life shall show how highly I esteem his Majesty’s favour. The Almighty send to your lordship health, and make you His good means to help me out of this great grief. Your lordship’s most distressed friend.”

This last paragraph was, however, omitted in the final copy. Already the unhappy lady was growing distracted with her grief, and her clear brain was shaken and confused. It was a return in more marked form of the nerve storm at Hardwick in 1603, but this time her

emotions were more deeply engaged and her health already undermined. Of the friends to whom she wrote, Salisbury might perhaps in time have helped her; but nothing could be done suddenly, and he himself died the following year, leaving her enemy, Northampton, in complete power at Court. Her Christmas letter to the Queen, quoted in Chapter XV, and undated, has by some been held to have been written this Christmas of 1611 instead of the preceding one. The matter is one that can never be finally decided, but the language of the letter, though officially abject enough, carries scarcely that ring of absolute and personal misery which is so noticeable in these last appeals.

In January 1612, Seymour, urged by his grandfather, who had at last obtained a promise from the Council that he should be left unmolested so long as he remained abroad, wrote his thanks for this concession: "May it please your most honourable Lordships.—It is no small comfort unto me in my hard misfortunes that I have now opportunity whereby I may shew mine obedience unto his sacred Majesty and the State. Were the things commanded me never so difficult (which I must needs confess proceeds all from his Majesty's most gracious clemency beyond my desert), God is my witness, I would obey and undergo them with as great alacrity as the things I most desire. I acknowledge myself beyond measure bound to your Lordships for the very mild proceedings which through your honourable mediations I have found, and this encourageth me farther to become an humble suitor unto your Lordships for procuring the increase of his most royal Majesty's goodness and benignity towards me, which, while I have breath, with my utmost endeavours I will duly study to deserve, and rest always, To be commanded by your Lordships in all things, William Seymour."

No doubt the writing of this letter was a wise step, but to Arbella in her loneliness, it must have seemed to confirm her husband's growing resignation to his exile. Yet this, too, might be intended wilfully to mislead;

perhaps he was coming to her soon, and still she trusted him. The unselfish words she had spoken on board the *Adventure* at her capture were true from her heart, and she rejoiced freely at his liberty; yet often she must have longed for a word of tenderness, for the face or the touch of him for whom she had risked and lost her all. During this year Seymour's father, the colourless Lord Beauchamp, died, and his eldest brother Edward assumed the courtesy title.

In the beginning of July, Lady Shrewsbury was again called before a select committee of the Privy Council at York House to answer for her "high and great contempt" in refusing to speak at her examination. There was little for her to say, since her share in her niece's escape had already been proved; but she still refused to explain or discuss the matter, first, because she had made a "rash vow" not to do so, and it was better to obey God than man, and second, because she stood upon her privilege of nobility and would answer only before her peers. Sir Francis Bacon, who, as Solicitor-General, presided at this trial, made a long speech, describing Arbella's iniquities which, though endeavouring to palliate James's cruel conduct from his own point of view, shows a weak enough case for the King. "How graciously and parent-like his Highness used the Lady Arbella before she gave him cause of indignation the world knoweth," exclaims this distinguished advocate, yet her crime consisted "in transacting the most weighty and binding part and action of her life, which is her marriage, without acquainting his Majesty, which had been a neglect even to a mean parent; but being to our sovereign, and standing so near his Majesty as she doth, and she then choosing such a condition as it pleased her to choose, all parties laid together, how dangerous it was my lady might have read it in the fortune of that house whereunto she is matched: for it is not unlike the case of Mr. Seymour's grandmother. The King, nevertheless, so remembered he was a king as he forgot not he was a kinsman, and placed her only *sub libera custodia*. But now did my lady accumulate

and heap up the offence with a far greater than the former, by seeking to withdraw herself out of the King's power into foreign parts. That this flight or escape into foreign parts might have been seed of trouble to this state, is a matter whereof the conceit of a vulgar person is not incapable. For although my lady should have put on a mind to continue her loyalty, as nature and duty did bind her, yet, when she was in another sphere, she must have moved in the motion of that orb, and not of the planet itself, and God forbid the King's felicity should be so little as he should not have envy and enviers enough in foreign parts." As to Lady Shrewsbury herself, "a lady wise, and that ought to know what duty requireth," her behaviour was unfavourably contrasted with Arbella's own, and she was bidden, "Learn duty of the Lady Arbella herself, a lady of the blood, of a higher rank than yourself, who declining, and that by request neither, to declare of your fact, yieldeth ingenuously to be examined of her own."

The final verdict of the Star Chamber upon the Countess was that she should pay a fine of £20,000 and be confined during the King's pleasure; but she refused to humble herself in any way, and returned proudly to her prison in the Tower. Their estates already crippled with debt, neither she nor her husband could possibly raise the money, and probably it was not really expected of them. Lady Shrewsbury's imprisonment had never been a rigorous one, and she was now allowed the "liberty of the Tower"; while a few months later, her husband having been taken seriously ill, she was permitted to return home to nurse him.

Only Arbella remained within those gloomy walls, prey to a melancholy which took on darker shades as each month passed.

CHAPTER XIX

“ FAIR ARABELLA, CHILD OF WOE ” (1612-15).

SORROW came to the royal palace that autumn, and trouble lay heavily upon James; but it did not serve to soften his heart towards his unhappy cousin. He had lately busied himself in arranging marriages for his son and daughter, Henry and Elizabeth: he wished Henry to marry a Spanish princess, but the young prince, urged by Raleigh, whom he visited often in the Tower and in whose opinion he reposed the greatest confidence, disliked the idea, and for the present this matter lay in abeyance. Determined, however, to conciliate the Protestant as well as the Catholic princes, the King had promised his daughter to the head of the German Calvinists, Frederick V, Elector Palatine; and it was settled that the wedding was to take place before Christmas. Queen Anne was annoyed that her daughter should not make a more illustrious match, wishing her to have married Philip III of Spain himself; and teased her, calling her “Goody Palsgrave,” but Elizabeth, now sixteen and “Queen of Hearts” to be, had fallen in love with her German suitor, and was contented with her lot. Her adored brother Henry approved and liked Frederick, and that was sufficient for her.

In September James had the body of his mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, removed from Peterborough, where she had been first buried, and placed beneath the magnificent monument he had designed for her in the south aisle of Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster Abbey. Old gossips shook their heads at this, and said it was ill-luck to open a grave, for another of the same family would fill it ere long. Strangely enough, from that day Prince Henry lost energy, developed a hacking cough, and rapidly grew very

ill. He must always, one judges now, have been delicate and of a consumptive tendency; and he grew much too fast, being over six feet by his seventeenth year. But he was no sluggard, struggled bravely with his weakness, and took his full share in entertaining his future brother-in-law when the Pfalzgraf arrived in October for his wedding. The same month, however, Henry was suddenly attacked by serious illness, and by the end of October lay in great danger in his rooms at St. James's Palace, watched constantly by his father, who, forgetting earlier differences, now devoted himself unremittingly to his first-born son; while Queen Anne, though always doting upon her handsome boy, feared infection too abjectly to approach him. Nevertheless, she was in great agitation at his danger, and as a last resource, sent to Raleigh in the Tower, to ask for some of his famous Cordial. He sent her a bottle (the ingredients, among other things, comprised pearl, musk, hartshorn, bezoar stone, mint, borragé, gentian, mace, red rose, aloes, sugar, sassafras, and spirits of wine), and with it a message that it would cure all ills but poison. The young prince took it, rallied an hour or two, and died on the 5th November. He was buried in the very vault that had been opened not two months earlier to receive the body of his grandmother, Mary Stuart.

Raleigh's words caused people to whisper that the Prince must have been poisoned; and there were not wanting some to accuse his father of the deed; an absurd accusation, of course. Henry seems really to have died of typhoid, his delicacy rendering him peculiarly open to infection. The Cordial itself was never blamed, and was regarded as of sovereign power for many years after: Queen Anne, Charles I and Charles II all placed implicit faith in it. The death of Henry made "Baby Charles," now twelve, his father's heir, as he had always been his father's favourite; but Queen Anne had an unreasoning dislike for this weakly younger son of hers. On one occasion when he was very ill and refused to take his medicine, his attendants begged her to come and herself persuade him to it, upon which she petulantly declined.

“ But, Madam ! ” cried they, “ The Prince may die ! ”
“ No indeed, ” replied his angry mother. “ He will live to plague three kingdoms yet by his wilfulness. ” Charles himself had loved and adored his elder brother, and never forgot him. Walking from St. James’s Palace to Whitehall on the morning of his execution nearly forty years later, he pointed out a certain tree to Bishop Juxon with the words, “ That tree was planted by my brother Henry. ”

Princess Elizabeth’s wedding was of course postponed by the sad event of her brother’s death ; but only for three months, and she was married at Whitehall on the 14th February, 1613 : Queen Anne appearing at the ceremony “ all in white, but not very rich, saving in jewels, ” said Chamberlain ; while another observer remarks that she caressed the Pfalzgraf “ as if he were her own son. ” Elizabeth was a gentle-natured girl, and it seems that though Henry had renounced the friendship of his unfortunate cousin Arbella, his sister felt for her still, and in the midst of her own happiness managed somehow to convey to her an assurance that on the occasion of her wedding she would endeavour to soften her father’s heart and win a promise of release. Arbella was overjoyed ; the gleam of hope brought youth and radiance to her again, and reckoning too much upon it, she took for granted she would be present at the wedding, and that all would be forgiven on so auspicious an occasion. Certain of this, she commanded four new gowns, one of which cost £1,500 ; and awaited impatiently the news of her pardon. But it never came. Elizabeth could not herself plead for the prisoner with her father, to whom none of his own family now dared mention her name : but she begged her bridegroom to do so, convinced that the King could not be so churlish as to refuse this slight boon to one whom he protested himself delighted to honour. But she had not yet learnt the tenacity of her father’s hate. His reply to the petition was, “ If Judas were alive again, and condemned for betraying Christ, some courtier would be found to beg his pardon. ” Frederick had also been asked to plead for the release of Lord Grey, who, with Raleigh, had been

imprisoned in the Tower since the Cobham Plot of 1603; and to this second request the King added, "Son, when I come into Germany, I will promise you not to importune you for any of your prisoners."

So Elizabeth could do no more, and sailed away to the Rhine with her German lover.

Upon this desperate disappointment, Arbella fell into a fit of hysterical melancholy bordering nearly upon madness. She had never fully recovered from her former illness, and now sank back into the convulsive fits from which she had suffered on her fatal journey towards the north. "The Lady Arbella," writes Chamberlain on March 10th, "hath been dangerously sick of convulsions, and is now said to be distracted, which, it if be so, comes well to pass for somebody, whom they say she hath nearly touched." The somebody alluded to is certainly Lady Shrewsbury, of whom the same gossip had written in the end of January that in spite of her apparent freedom, she "is now restrained and kept more close upon somewhat discovered against her (as they say) by her niece the Lady Arbella." It is very unlikely that Arbella would have made any charge against her only friend, and Chamberlain was probably misinformed; his evidence is only hearsay and never very trustworthy. The Countess was, it is true, twice called to appear before the Lords this year, but since she still stedfastly refused to speak, this seems to have been a mere form periodically indulged in. The Elector's plea for Lord Grey meanwhile did him no good, and only led to stricter watching lest there might after all have been some truth in that old Cobham Plot ten years before, and he and Arbella be in some secret communication. In the end of April we hear that the Lord Grey had of late "been restrained and kept more strait, for having had conference with one of Lady Arbella's women, who, being strictly examined, was fain to confess that it was only matter of love and dalliance. The Lady Arbella is likewise restrained of late, though they say her brain continues still crackt, and the Countess of Shrewsbury more close than at any time before, and not without cause, as the voice goes."

Grey died, still a prisoner in the Tower, a few months later.

The news of his wife’s state had evidently reached Seymour in Paris, for a letter from some unknown person about him, dated 26th May, 1613, relates that he had been much annoyed at the King’s refusal to bestow his grace upon him or allow him and his lady to come together again, “so that she has become distracted in mind, whereby he hears she cannot live long.” He was evidently deeply disappointed that his submission to the Council more than a year earlier had led to nothing more, and it is remarked that “He has therefore determined to take some other course” : but it does not appear that he ever carried out the threat. This same month of May, Sir William Waad was dismissed from his post at the Tower, “to the great contentment of the prisoners,” on a charge of embezzling some of Arbella’s jewels. This charge was never proved, but she certainly both sold and pawned jewels while in the Tower, for Sir Walter Raleigh bought some, and others she herself redeemed in the end of this year. With all his restrictions, James never stopped her allowance, and the £1,000 a year bestowed upon her in her days of zenith was still punctually paid to her account all the time she was in prison. In November Hugh Crompton, her faithful steward, was released from the Fleet, and immediately took charge of her affairs again : his account book for the following six months throws many interesting side-lights upon her life in the Tower. During that time she bought a diamond ring and other jewels, besides plate, clothes and furniture, and also redeemed “ten great pearls,” that had been pawned for her. Crompton sent her the money for these “on a warrant from my lady” ; and it is recorded that £142 6s. 1d. was spent upon her diet during twelve weeks. Several sums of money were also by her direction sent to Seymour in Paris, and it was probably through Crompton that the precious “Book of Hours,” left her by her aunt, Mary of Scotland, was conveyed as a last gift of love to her husband ; her signature, “Your Most unfortunate Arbella Seymour,” having first been inscribed

in it. This valuable book was purchased in Paris by a Russian named Dubrowski during the French Revolution, and is now in the Musée de l'Ermitage at St. Petersburg. A print of Arbella in the British Museum bears a facsimile of her handwriting, "Sweet Brother, Every one forsakes me but those who cant helpe me, Your most unfortunate sister, Arbella Seymoure," and it is conjectured that these words were addressed by her about this same time to Francis Seymour, the only member of her husband's family who showed any desire, and that a poor one, to befriend her. Francis was knighted by the King at Royston in October of this year, so had evidently been restored to favour by now.

Arbella had still, however, some faithful servants devoted to her interests. Crompton was no sooner free than he set about devising means of rescue for his beloved lady. His plan seems from the beginning to have been foredoomed to failure, and had probably not been entirely shaped before suspicion was aroused: we should never even have heard of it were it not for Northampton's letter of triumph at having nipped it in the bud. Lady Shrewsbury, though still nominally under surveillance, was now at home nursing her husband, and was naturally supposed to have devised the scheme: at the first breath of it she was peremptorily commanded to return to the Tower. On the 23rd November, 1613, Northampton writes that he has sent the King's directions to the Earl of Shrewsbury by the Lieutenant, who was "to take home the prisoner": and two days later he records that "the prisoner is sent back to Mr. Lieutenant, though a request for longer absence had been proposed; but upon better advertisement" Lord Shrewsbury had decided to say nothing for the moment, but later to prefer a petition for more liberty for her. Some have supposed that the "prisoner" here mentioned was Arbella herself, and that she had been permitted to leave the Tower for her uncle's house; but official mention would certainly have been made of such an arrangement, and it is in the highest degree improbable. The new Lieutenant, Waad's successor, was Sir Gervase

Helwys. Northampton continues, “ With much ado, and withal by very good fortune, we have hit upon the place destined to the escape. It falls out to be under a study of Mr. Revenes [Ruthven ? Reeves ?] but of these things I shall have occasion before it be long to deal thoroughly. In the meantime his Majesty will be pleased to reserve this secret from all the world but yourself [Somerset], till we sound the bottom, for it hath thus far been carried with a great deal of art.”

Reeves, Seymour’s old servant, and Dr. Palmer, Chaplain of the Tower, were certainly involved in the plot—the sum of £20 to Dr. Palmer was entered by Crompton in Arbella’s account book for this year—but their share in it cannot have been discovered for some time afterwards, since it was not till the 7th July, 1614, that Chamberlain, writing to Dudley Carleton, remarks that “ One Dr. Palmer, a divine, and Crompton, a gentleman usher, were committed to the Tower last week for some business about the Lady Arbella, who, they say, is far out of frame this Midsummer moone ” : while on the 6th August the Rev. Thomas Larkin, writing to Sir Thomas Puckering, mentions “ The Tower, whither were committed about a fortnight since certain servants of the Lady Arbella’s—Crompton, Reeves, and Dr. Palmer, the cause whereof is said to be some new complot for her escape and delivery.” It was the last attempt, and probably Arbella herself was the cause of its failure, for her fine intelligence was utterly wrecked, and she had no longer either the energy or the wits to profit by the desperate efforts of these her faithful friends.

The King of Denmark once more visited England this year, but he seems to have forgotten the “ holy friendship ” he had vowed to this unfortunate lady during his last visit, or perhaps he too found it impossible to intercede with James. Either Arbella herself had long ceased to write letters imploring help and mercy, or else these have not been preserved : we have but one fragment of this period, a draft of a letter to the King, written in a wild and shaking hand, and never finished or sent. In it she seems

to touch the very bottom of despair; she had ceased to hope even in the husband for whom she had sacrificed so much, and there is no longer any reason why she should wish to live. The mention of Frea her "imbrederer" recalls the fact that he was one of those concerned in her attempted escape from Hardwick eleven years earlier, and shows, if proof were needed, how unswerving was the attachment Arbella always inspired in those who truly loved her. "In all humility—in most humble wise—the most wretched and unfortunate creature that ever lived, prostrates itself at the feet of the most merciful King that ever was, desiring nothing but mercy and favour, not being more afflicted for anything than for the loss of that which hath been this long time the only comfort it had in the world, and which if it were to do again, I would not adventure the loss of for any other worldly comfort. Mercy it is I desire, and that for God's sake. Let either Frea or——"

The last words are struck out, and the paper is torn across. Henceforth Arbella's voice is silent.

As once before at Barnet, she took to her bed in despair, and would neither walk nor move, scarcely eat. Without actual self-murder, she had declared she "dared die," and now was prepared to prove it. The Council, learning that "The Lady Arbella, prisoner in the Tower, is of late fallen into some indisposition of body and mind," in September 1614 sent Dr. Fulton, "a person of gravity and learning, to comfort her as is expedient for a Christian in cases of weakness and infirmity, to visit her occasionally as the Lieutenant of the Tower thinketh wise, and to give her spiritual comfort and advice." But all was in vain: she listened no more to him than to the doctors, whose medicine she refused to take; and gradually her physical condition became more and more hopeless. She grew frightfully thin, suffered great pain, and at last died on the 25th September, 1615. The actual cause of her death seems to have been liver trouble, aggravated of course by the confinement in which she had lived and her refusal to take any exercise.

According to custom the Tower authorities next day requested the President of the College of Surgeons to send certain doctors to view the corpse, since the cry of poison was as usual certain to be raised, and it was thought advisable as “ on like occasions when prisoners of great quality died in that place, her body should be viewed by persons of skill and trust and thereupon certainty be made of what disease she died, as their judgment might appear.” The President himself, and Doctors William Paddy, Edward Lister, Richard Palmer, John Argent, and Matthew Gwyn, all Fellows of the College, accordingly met Arbella’s own Dr. Moundford at eight o’clock on the 27th September in her dreary chamber at the Tower, reported that her body was “ of an extreme leanness,” and that she had died of a “ chronic and long sickness ”; and so ordered her to be embalmed; for which Dr. Primrose, one of the King’s own surgeons, received the sum of £6 13s. 4d. nearly a year later.

Thrown hastily into a wretched coffin, the last remains of this “ ill-fated and persecuted lady,” as Nichols calls her, were conveyed by night from the Tower to Westminster Abbey, where for the third time was opened that vault already containing the bodies of Mary Stuart and Henry, Prince of Wales. With no ceremony, the Burial Service hurriedly muttered over her by the light of flickering torches, her coffin was pushed in here and left, and for many years not even a stone marked the place where Arbella Stuart lay. The plain inscription “ Arabella Stuart, Born in 1575, died in 1615,” is now cut into the pavement. Crull, who wrote a *Guide to the Abbey* in 1711, declares that he had entered the vault and seen her coffin “ much shattered and broken, so that her skull and body may be seen : ” and Bishop Goodman, endeavouring rather lamely to excuse King James’s conduct to his cousin in his *History of our own Times*, remarks that “ To have a great funeral for one dying out of the King’s favour would have reflected upon the King’s honour, and therefore it was omitted.” But Arbella herself would have cared little, for on that cold September morning the prison doors had opened for her and she was free at last.

Lady Shrewsbury, who does really seem to have mourned her niece, had been told on the night of the 23rd that she was dying, and then on the following morning that she was much better: the news of her death, therefore, came as a great shock, and she does not seem to have recovered from it for some time. A letter of hers to the Countess of Cumberland, dated the 8th December, speaks of her "heavy loss" and "hard fortune," says that Arbella "died a saint," and thanks the Countess for her sympathy, but states that her heart is still so full of sorrow she can think of little else. Her troubles in championing her niece, however, were not yet quite over. In the following January rumours fled abroad that while in Sir Thomas Parry's house at Lambeth, Arbella had given birth to a child, that her subsequent ill-health had been caused by moving her too barbarously soon to Highgate, and that her son still lived and was being secretly brought up in the country to prove a later menace to James and his dynasty. There was nothing impossible in this story, and the King was seriously alarmed at it. He appointed four commissioners, Abbot, Suffolk, Winwood and Bacon, to inquire into its truth; no easy matter, for they had to produce proof which would finally convince a credulous world as well as themselves, and everybody who might have given information either refused to speak or declare he knew nothing. Seymour himself was appealed to and denied all knowledge of such a child; Sir John Keys and Dr. Moundford, Arbella's physicians, and Kirton and Reeves, her servants, said the same; Lady Shrewsbury, when called upon, followed her usual policy of an obstinate silence. The one person who must infallibly have known had Arbella really borne a child, was her faithful woman, Anne Bradshaw, who had witnessed her marriage, participated in her escape, and never left her for years until torn from her side by the stern restrictions of her last imprisonment. Mrs. Bradshaw had disappeared, and it was thought she might be in charge of the hypothetical infant, so all England was searched to find her; and she was at last discovered, too ill to be moved, at Duffield in Derbyshire.

No, she said positively, her lady had never had a child. Sir Clement Edmondcs, Clerk of the Privy Council, was sent down to Duffield to take her evidence on oath, and the tale seems never to have cropped up again. But Lady Shrewsbury’s “contempt” was not yet punished. In May 1616 her husband Gilbert died, and leaving no sons, was succeeded as sixth Earl of Shrewsbury by his brother Edward : and as late as two years after, in June 1618, his intrepid widow was once more called before the Star Chamber to explain her reticence concerning Arbella’s “pretended child.” She then owned she herself did not believe in the child, and so finally was let alone : but she had her revenge upon the cruelties of Northampton and Suffolk and all their house in that it was she, says Johnstone, “who first set on foot the enquiry into the murder of Overbury by the Countess of Somerset (also a Howard) which in the result shook to its foundation and almost threw to the ground the House of Howard.”

Arbella left many jewels and valuable dresses at her death, some of the latter being quite new and never worn. The week after her death one Abraham Denderkin complained to the Council that he had delivered “pearls to the value of £400 or thereabouts for the use of Lady Arbella, now lately deceased, for the which he had received no satisfaction, that the pearls were embroidered on a gown now in the Tower, and if the gown should be conveyed away he were in danger to lose his pearls ; therefore,” the Council commanded, “Mr. Lieutenant should take into his safe custodie as well the said gown as all other her Ladyship’s apparrell and other goods, until order be given for disposing of them.” A month later, on the 12th October, the Lieutenant was authorized to deliver up the Lady Arbella’s apparel, “saving the riche gown embroidered with Pearl, to whom they shall appertain.” This was probably the dress she had ordered for the Princess Elizabeth’s wedding. Many of her jewels seem to have been irregularly sold either before or after her death to other persons in the Tower ; for on the 14th October the Privy Council issued a warrant to Sir Walter Rawley, Kt.,

the Lady Helwyss (wife of the Lieutenant), Robert Branthwaite, and Katheren Croshoe, to deliver up to Samuell Smyth "all such goods of the Lady Arbella, lately deceased, as are in their hands and custodie."

Seymour himself was still waiting on fortune in Paris when his wife died. Discontented as usual, he could not find the £200 a year allowed him by his grandfather sufficient for his wants, and constantly complained that it was impossible to avoid debt upon such a beggarly income. His claims to extract from Waad what he still declared to be his property were assiduously pushed by Smyth, who at last became such a nuisance that the ex-Lieutenant complained to the Council and got an "Order by general consent of their Lordships that stay should be made of all Suites whatsoever commenced against the said Sir William Waad in the name and behalf of the said Mr. Seymour untill such time as he should personally repair into this Kingdom and be answerable also unto such actions and matters as should be objected against him. Of which order the said Smyth is requested to take notice, and in case he shall notwithstanding contemptuously proceed in his said suit or actions against the said Sir William Waad, it is also further ordered that he should then be restrayned of his liberty and committed to prison." Apparently, however, the King and Council came to the conclusion about now that it was scarcely wise to drive Seymour to too great extremities; and learning that he had left Paris, ostensibly because the life there was too expensive for him, and had returned to the Netherlands, a conciliatory letter was penned to his grandfather, setting forth that their Lordships had heard that Mr. William Seymour had many debts in France, else that he would gladly return there from the Archduke's dominions; "that he seemed desirous to behave himself abroad by such discreet and dutiful carriage as might merit and regain his Majesty's grace and favour, but so long as he remains in that place, which is a receptacle and retreat for priests, papists, and fugitives, he can hardly do so. That the King was reasonably angry . . . but so gracious is his

Majesty’s care of this poor gentleman, and so unwilling that he should add offence to offence by being corrupted in religion or allegiance or both, that he is content your lordship should give order for enabling him to return and remain in France.”

This was tantamount to commanding Lord Hertford to pay the young man’s debts, but he does not seem immediately to have availed himself of the permission. Something must have been done, however, for the letter from the Council is dated the 21st May, and by September Seymour was again in Paris. A further complaint of poverty to his brother Francis is endorsed as received on the 28th September, and Francis has added on the back, “ The Lady Arbella died Tuesday night, being the 25th September, 1615.”

After this there was no particular reason why William Seymour should remain abroad, since his wife’s wrongs do not appear to have touched him at all. The way paved for him by his grandfather, on the 1st January, 1616, this calculating young man wrote a letter of abject humility to the King. “ Vouchsafe, dread sovereign, to cast your most merciful eyes upon the most humble and penitent wretch that youth and ignorance have thrown into transgression, and shut not up your mercy from him to whom time and riper years have given the true sense and feeling of his errors, and to whom nothing remains but hope of your princely mercy and forgiveness, and that not of merit, but out of your royal goodness, whereunto I most humbly appeal, acknowledging upon the knees of my heart the grievous offences of my youth, the which with the tribute of my life in your Majesty’s service, I shall ever account most happily redeemed. Be therefore pleased, I most humbly beseech your most sacred Majesty, to take home a lost sheep of yours, whose exile hath been accompanied with many afflictions, besides the loss of your Majesty’s most gracious favour, which hath given a most bitter feeling to all the rest. Thus beseeching the Almighty that rules the hearts of Kings, to move your Majesty to restore me, I most humbly prostrate myself at your princely feet,

heartily praying for the long preservation of your Majesty and your most royal progeny, of whose end may the world never see an end till she feel her own. Your Majesty's most loyal subject and servant."

This appeal was answered with almost indecent haste. James seems to have been ready now to promise anything which should draw his dreaded rival back from the influence of the Archdukes to his own country; and on the 5th January the council wrote in reply: "We have received a letter from you wherein we are very glad to observe that you acknowledge your fault and high offence unto his Majesty with a repentance as we hope unfeigned and sincere. We do therefore let you know that according to your humble request we have interceded for your return unto his Majesty, who is graciously pleased, upon this your sorrowful and humble submission, to extend his favour and mercy towards you, and is content that you may freely and safely come into your country again as soon as you think good, for which this letter shall be your warrant." On the 10th February, Winwood, writing to Lake, remarks that "Mr. William Seymour has returned, and is to see the King to-morrow." His restoration to favour must have been rapid, for in the following November, when Prince Charles was created Prince of Wales and several gentlemen were made Knights of the Bath, one of the first mentioned is "Mr. Seymour, that married the Lady Arbella." The following February Chamberlain writes to Carleton that "Sir William Seymour, that married the lady Arbella, is in some forwardness to marry the Earl of Essex' sister:" and shortly after he did indeed marry Frances Devereux, daughter of Robert, Earl of Essex, Arbella's early love. It seems, however, that he had not yet quite forgotten the royal lady who had died so tragically for love of him, for his first daughter, who died unmarried, was named Arbella.

In 1618 Edward Seymour died, leaving no children, and William became Lord Beauchamp; while in 1621, at the death of his aged grandfather, the title of Earl of Hertford passed to him. James I himself died four years later, in March 1625, and Hertford remained ever a devoted ad-

herent of the new King Charles. His staunch attachment to a hopeless cause during those dark days of revolution constitutes Hertford's highest claim to praise; and in the light of his later courage and selflessness one is disposed to search more diligently for excuses to explain his strangely cold conduct to his first wife. In 1640 Charles created him Marquis of Hertford, and the following year made him Governor to the Prince of Wales, a post of peril and difficulty. His splendid conduct during the defence of Sherborne Castle in 1642, and at the battle of Lansdowne in 1643, deserves undying remembrance; while at the last dreadful scenes of the King's Trial in January 1649, he with the Duke of Richmond and the Earl of Southampton implored the Court to hold them responsible for advising the King's actions and to allow them to bear the penalty. Their plea was refused, and when at last the crime of regicide had been committed, these three gentlemen together with Lord Lindesay obtained permission to bury the body of the King in the Royal Chapel at Windsor. It was the 7th February, and a bitter winter's day, as the four faithful nobles held the pall over the coffin; and so thickly fell the snow that before they had ascended the steps and entered the chapel the dark pall was covered with its flakes. "So went our King white to his grave."

At the Restoration in May 1660, Hertford was one of the first to welcome Charles II at Dover. The Stuarts were not always forgetful of services done them, and four months later the new King revived in his favour the title of Duke of Somerset, last borne by Hertford's great-grandfather the Protector, who had forfeited it in April 1552. He himself did not enjoy it for long, however, since he died the following month, on the 24th October, 1660, and was buried in the church of Great Bedwyn, with his daughter Arbella beside him. His eldest son had predeceased him, leaving a son who assumed the title, but he also left another son and two daughters. Hertford was described by Clarendon as "A man of great honour, interest and estate, of an universal esteem over the whole kingdom, as one who had carried himself with notable

steadiness from the beginning of the Parliament in the support and defence of the King's power and dignity . . . not to be shaken in his affection to the government of the Church. . . . The party opposed to him carried themselves towards him with profound respect, not presuming to venture their own credit in endeavouring to lessen his. . . . It was thought no little honour and credit to the Court that so important and beloved a person should attach himself to it." Unfortunately the only portrait obtainable of William Seymour, Marquis of Hertford, shows him in later life, when the rather heavy face had lost all the enigmatic charm which had captured poor Arbella's romantic heart.

Of Hugh Crompton we know only that he was Member of Parliament for Great Bedwyn for the year 1623-4, and that he died in August 1645; while Edward Kirton was Member for the same place in 1627 and died in 1654.

Arbella's picture was many times painted, and though some of the miniatures supposed to represent her are doubtfully authentic, concerning the large majority there can be no question. The earliest is the baby portrait given in this volume; the latest, which I have not been able to trace, is reported to have shown her with dishevelled hair and ravaged face as she appeared during her last sad days in the Tower. It was bought at Christie's in 1827 by the Rev. M. Butt. A tiresome form of complimenting the reigning Queen at this period was to paint the ladies of her Court as resembling her as much as possible, and this is why many of the pictures called by Arbella's name may as well be intended for Queen Elizabeth or Anne of Denmark. She can generally be recognized by the thick rope of pearls which, as a family ornament, she almost invariably wore; but for some of her best known portraits she chose other jewels. A pair of jet earrings in the form of tiny bows of black ribbon was a favourite with her, and in perhaps the most charming of her pictures (*see* Frontispiece) she has hit upon the quaint notion of wearing a pearl in one ear and one of these in the other. Her hair is represented as light, fair, reddish



WILLIAM SEYMOUR
First Marquis of Hertford

or mouse-colour; it was certainly not dark : and the same variety applies to her eyes. Mostly they are painted as blue, sometimes grey or hazel, and more rarely brown : but probably her charm lay chiefly in this variety, as it had done in the case of her aunt, Mary of Scotland, whose pictured face is not, according to our modern notions, strictly beautiful. The later portraits of Arbella are stiff and plain, but these are the least authentic : mostly she was painted before her cousin's accession, when her own future was full of golden possibilities. Her hands were white and beautiful. Bishop Goodman of Gloucester, the King's apologist, writes that, having sometimes displeased James in his life, " so give me leave to blame him a little after his death, especially in that business of the Lady Arbella, for her usage and her imprisonment only for her marrying the now Earl of Hertford, which marriage could be no disparagement to her nor to her royal kindred, but was every way a fit and convenient match. She was a very virtuous and a good-natured lady, and of great intellectuals, harmless, and gave no offence."

Alone, as she had mainly lived, Arbella died : one of the most pathetically friendless figures in all history. Had not her name been arbitrarily dragged into the meshes of the Cobham Plot, and had not that Plot proved the downfall of so famous a man as Walter Raleigh, she would probably by now have been unknown to all but students and delvers in the forgotten bypaths of historical research. Yet for almost thirty years she was held by many as the rightful heir to Queen Elizabeth, and a very slight inclination on her part might have changed the face of English history and given us a third Queen regnant in place of the Scottish James. She was, too, a better woman and a woman of more character than many whose lives—famous only through ill-fame—have been written and re-written to tedium : one of whom it may be truly said that the better she was known the better loved; intelligent, kind, faithful and brave : yet doomed, like all her unfortunate race, to bring disaster on those who loved her and to place her own heart in careless and unworthy keeping. Although

no epitaph was inscribed upon the spot where she was laid, one was written for her by a contemporary, Bishop Corbet of Norwich. Corbet was a courtier, had pronounced the funeral oration over Prince Henry, and was made a royal chaplain by James: it stands therefore all the more to his credit that he should so unhesitatingly have voiced the universal opinion of Arbella's misfortunes and cruel treatment. The words he wrote for her are these:

“ How do I thank thee, Death, and bless thy Power,
That I have past the Guard and 'scaped the Tower!
And now my Pardon is my Epitaph,
And a small Coffin my poor carcase hath;
For at thy charge both soul and body were
Enlarged at last, secured from hope and fear,
That among Saints, this amongst Kings is laid,
And that my birth did claim, my death hath paid.”

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

SINCE constant reference to foot-notes in a work of this description is both teasing to the eye and disturbing to the narrative, I have thought it best to cite all authorities for the foregoing pages in one place together. The period is peculiarly rich in private correspondence, and every letter quoted will be found amongst either the Harleian, Sloane, Cotton, Lansdowne, Spence, Ashmolean, Talbot, Howard or Cecil MSS., and drafts often in two or more collections with slight or no differences. Many also appear in Sir Henry Ellis's *Original Letters*, and (especially in connection with Arbella's escape) in Sir Ralph Winwood's *Memorials*; while much valuable matter is to be gleaned from the State Papers, Domestic Series, of both Elizabeth and James I. Lodge's *Illustrations of British History*, and *Portraits of Illustrious Persons*, J. Nichol's *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth and of James I*, Robert Parsons's contemporary *Treatise concerning the Broken Succession of the Crown of England*, Sir John Harington's *Tract on the Succession to the Crown*, are all full of interest: while other works that should be consulted on the period are the *Secret Correspondence of Sir Robert Cecil with James VI King of Scotland*, the *Secret History of the Court of James I*, Lucy Aiken's *Memoirs of the Court of King James I*, Mrs. Hutchinson's *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, Dr. Birch's *Life of Henry, Prince of Wales*, Spedding's *Life of Bacon*, *The Arraignment and Conviction of Sir Walter Raleigh*, Bishop Goodman's *Court of King James I*, Collins's *Historical Collections of the Noble Families of Cavendish*, Craik's *Romance of the Peerage*, and Hunter's *History of Hallamshire*. Mention should also be made of Inderwick's *Side-lights on the Stuarts*, Dr. Creighton's *Queen Elizabeth*, Froude's *History of England*, Hassall's *European History*, Mrs. Stepney Rawson's *Bess of Hardwick and her Circle*, and Miss Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of England*.

Arbella's own story, with its strange interweaving of romance and tragedy, formerly aroused much interest, and has been treated, both as history and fiction, more than once; the present writer claims no more than to have presented it to a new generation with, it is hoped, compassion and truth. Almost immediately after Arbella's death a rude Ballad was printed and sung about the streets, entitled "The True Lover's Knot Untied: Being the right Path whereby to advise Princely Virgins how to behave themselves by the example of the Renowned Princess the Lady Arbella and the Second Son of the Lord Seymore, late Earl of Hertford." It is, as might be expected, full of inaccuracies. Another ballad, scarcely more correct but far more poetical, first appeared in Evans's *Collection of Ballads* in 1777, and is supposed by Disraeli to have been written by Mickle: a stanza from it appears upon the title page of this book. Mrs. Hemans also wrote a blank verse poem upon the unfortunate lady; and in 1844 G. P. R. James produced a novel entitled *Arabella Stuart*. From a more serious standpoint there is a short notice of Arbella in G. Ballard's *Memoirs of British Ladies*, published in 1775, an excellent article in Isaac

Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, 1791 ; and an extremely interesting life in Miss Costello's *Memoirs of Eminent Englishwomen*, 1844. A short life may be found in Lodge's *Portraits*, while Miss Strickland gives a brief and romantic, if scarcely very correct, sketch in *Lives of the Tudor and Stuart Princesses* : and in 1866 Miss Cooper published her *Life and Letters of Lady Arabella Stuart*, by far the most sympathetic book on the subject ; though the author had not the advantage of consulting all the private MSS. so carefully and painstakingly dealt with by Mrs. Murray Smith in her *Life of Arabella Stuart*, published in 1889. So minutely and patiently has the last-named lady sifted and examined her evidence that after more than twenty years there is little to add to her discoveries ; though Comte de La Ferrière Percy's *Deux Romans d'aventure du 16ème Siècle* has been published since, in 1898. The life of William Seymour, Marquis of Hertford, has been fully treated by Lady Theresa Lewis in her *Lives of the Friends and Contemporaries of Clarendon*, and Lodge has also a short life of him in his *Portraits*.

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